

FLOWERS FOR THE WOMEN ADORNED WITH VEILS

ADDRESSES OF
HAZRAT KHALIFATUL MASIH V

MIRZA MASROOR AHMAD
MAY ALLAH BE HIS HELPER



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Mirza Masroor Ahmad (May Allah be his Helper)

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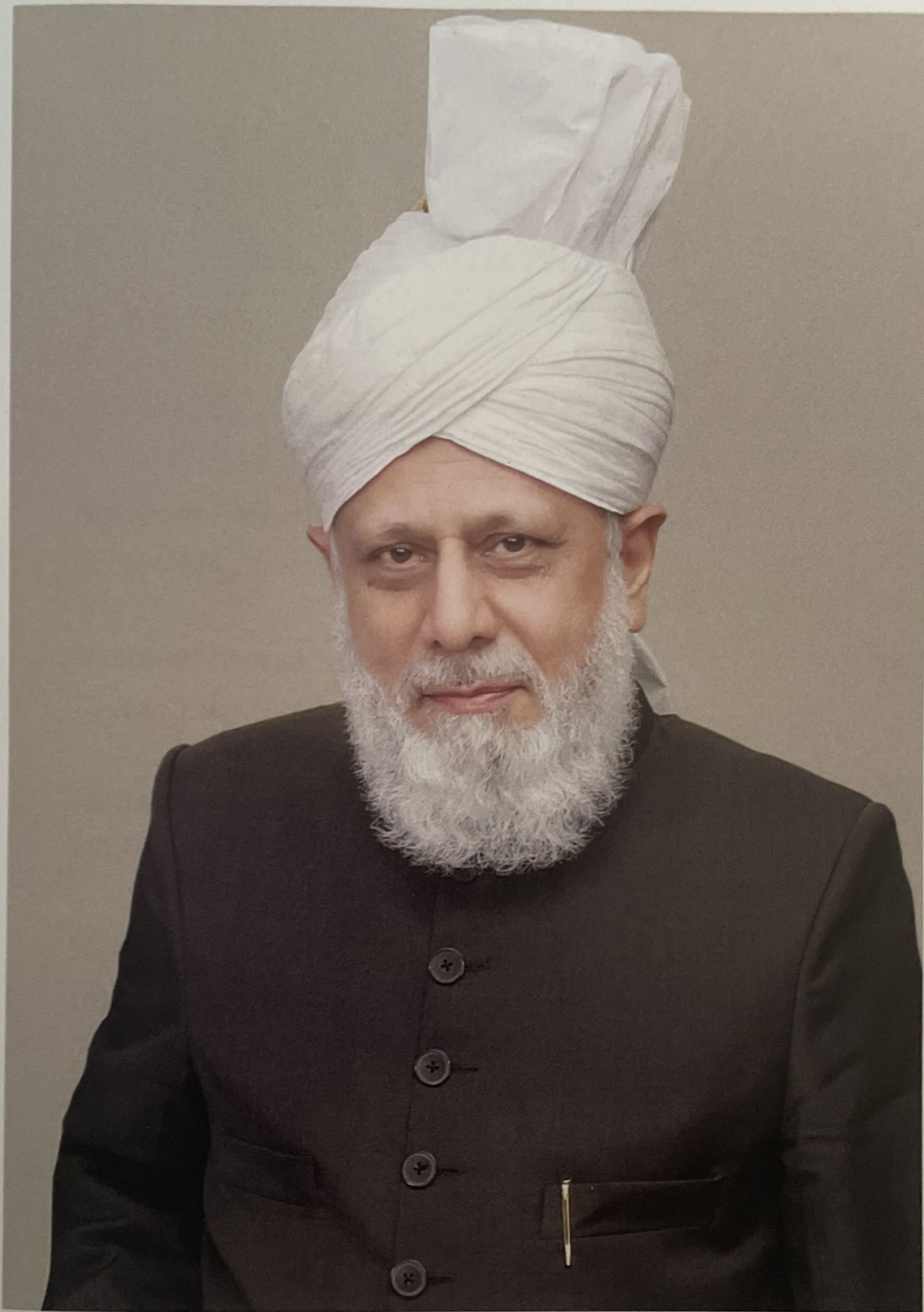
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Hadrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad^{aba}
Khalifatul-Masih V

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**Address to
office bearers
at the National Refresher
Course Lajna Ima'illah UK,
delivered on
*19th January 2014***

After reciting Tashhahud, Ta'awwuz and Surah Al-Fatihah, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} said:

“With the Grace of Allah, the Lajna Refresher Course is now reaching its conclusion. I am sure you will have derived a great deal of benefit from attending the refresher course and will have learnt a lot of new things.

Objectives of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at:

However, something of critical importance, which every Ahmadi man and woman needs to remember and properly understand, are the objectives of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at and the purposes with which the Promised Messiah^{as} was sent by Allah. The **Promised Messiah^{as} was sent to re-establish those virtues which had become lost from the world.** He was sent to revive those morals that pleased God and which Allah had taught through the Holy Prophet^{sa}. The Promised Messiah^{as} came to rejuvenate the pure and original teachings of Islam. That is why the Promised Messiah^{as} has very clearly explained that God Almighty sent him as a Saadiq – that is a truthful person – a truthful reformer of this age – with the objective of establishing a Jama'at that sincerely loved Allah the Almighty. Thus, first of all I would like to remind you that when you return from this refresher course and you meet the other members of your respective Majaalis or Majlis, with the intention of sharing whatever knowledge you gained here, the most important thing is that you seek to develop the love of God in their hearts. However, this great objective cannot be achieved until you yourself have developed a sincere and loving bond with Allah. Only when you come to truly love Allah will you begin to carry out your

every duty and task purely for His sake. Only, when you develop a real love of God will you come to shun and reject the love of the world and all forms of materialism. When you reach that stage your love for God will take precedence over all other things. The Promised Messiah^{as} also said that he was sent by God to establish a pious Jama'at filled with righteous hearts that resembled the companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}. **To resemble the companions is no easy or ordinary task, but rather it requires huge efforts and a constant commitment towards self-reformation.** Lajna members often deliver speeches at their Ijtimas or their meetings in which they cite the great examples of female companions such as Hazrat Umme Ammarah^{ra} and the incredible sacrifices they made. I too have often mentioned their pious examples during my speeches. We also regularly present the examples of the great financial sacrifices made by the female companions. Whilst, it is true that the vast majority of Ahmadi women have MashaAllah attained very high standards in terms of financial sacrifice, yet there remain many shortcomings in terms of emotional and other personal sacrifices. **Great effort still needs to be made in order to improve so that the Jama'at can come to resemble the blessed companions of the Holy Prophet^{sa}.** If each and every person pays attention to sacrificing their personal feelings and emotions for the sake of others they will reap so many benefits and blessings. The peace of their homes will be established, the relations between a husband and wife will blossom and the upbringing and training of children will be performed in an excellent manner.

Moral steadfastness and integrity:

It is a cause of major concern that we find in today's society our young girls are becoming increasingly influenced by their surroundings, by certain worldly attractions and by peer pressure. One example, which I also mentioned in this week's Friday Sermon, is that I have come to know that one vice has become particularly widespread amongst our boys and girls, and that is what is termed as using Shisha. It is said that Shisha is of no harm and is commonly used publicly by many people, including Muslims in restaurants. However, in reality it is quite likely that certain toxic elements are added to the Shisha in order to make people become addicted so that they return again and again. I have come to know of some boys and girls who say to their parents or elders that Shisha is entirely harmless and that no toxic or addictive ingredients are contained in it. They say that Shisha is very common amongst Muslims and that it is even served along with food in restaurants. Whatever they claim or say, the truth is that Shisha is an extremely bad and wrong habit. In my opinion, Shisha is even worse than smoking cigarettes because at least when people smoke cigarettes other people usually come to know of this vice and so can give them the required help and guidance to end the bad habit. Furthermore, at least with cigarettes it is known what ingredients are contained – although nowadays some toxic elements are being added to cigarettes also – but at least that can be controlled or I can say it is as harmful as shisha or shisha is as harmful as cigarettes. Whilst as I just said, in my view, certain undisclosed harmful substances are added to Shisha to make it addictive. Even if nothing is added, Shisha itself is harmful. Thus, you need to

draw the attention of others to this and pay heed to entirely eliminating this practice throughout members of Lajna Imai'llah. We must pay attention to all such matters because the Promised Messiah^{as} said that foremost amongst his objectives was to **create a Jama'at who always gave precedence to Allah and did not allow any obstacles to hinder them in this righteous path.** To fulfil this objective of giving preference to Allah in all matters requires huge sacrifices. To remove the obstacles that stand in the way of Allah necessitates moral steadfastness and integrity and demands that you forsake all those things that can threaten your faith. No doubt a great deal of attention needs to be paid to this. Remember, in terms of the Ahmadiyya Jama'at, the Promised Messiah^{as} himself has said that Allah has promised him that He shall provide him with a community of people whose hearts will be cleansed of all vices and a community who will not seek to corrupt their faith by blending it with worldly attractions. He said that his Jama'at will act upon the real teachings of the Holy Qur'an. Thus, if **we do not possess these qualities and if we do not follow these teachings then we will be replaced by others who are better than us.** God Almighty will always continue to provide people to the Promised Messiah^{as}. Therefore, we need to stand up and prove ourselves worthy; we need to reform ourselves and live up to the standards the Promised Messiah^{as} expected from us. And after reforming ourselves we must seek to reform all others around us. We often say with great pride and joy that the Promised Messiah^{as} himself said that this is Allah's chosen Jama'at and so He has bestowed His grace and blessings upon it and He desires for it to become a Community that will prove

to be an example for all others. However, if we do not reform ourselves and do not act in accordance with Allah's commands – how can we be considered an example for others? **In fact if we fail in our tasks it may be that our future generations will complain about us that** “if only they had been a better example then we would have been saved and directed towards the right path.”

Necessary attribute for all office bearers:

Always remember that the Promised Messiah^{as} has said that truth, honesty and compassion are the hallmarks of his Community. Thus, every office-bearer must always uphold the very **highest standards of truthfulness** in all matters. The standards to follow has been laid down very clearly in the Qur'an where it says that even if you have to testify against yourself, your parents or your loved ones then you must do so. That is the standard of truth that each and every office bearer must demonstrate. Only when you follow such standards of **honesty and integrity** will you be worthy of being called an office bearer and deserving of that with which you have been entrusted. Only then will you be able to properly discharge the duties allocated to Lajna Imai'llah. Honesty requires that when you submit your Lajna reports they should always be entirely accurate and truthful. You should not send reports only with the aim of obtaining the highest rank or position. Similarly, when entering academic competitions at Ijtimas your primary motivation should not be to win an award, but rather your aim should be to increase your religious knowledge and to impart whatever you have learned to others. All Lajna should prepare for such functions and

events with this spirit in mind. And so in summary, you must give **preference to the truth in all matters**. Another necessary attribute for all office bearers is that of being **compassionate and sympathetic**. As office bearers you should treat your subordinates and other members of the Jama'at of Lajna with **love, kindness and compassion**. Your sentiments of love and affection will attract others towards you and towards the Majlis activities, and so their attachment to the Jama'at will grow. Indeed, remember that Allah the Almighty said to the Holy Prophet^{sa} that it was his love and kindness that drew people towards him like a magnet and that if he had been harsh or unforgiving people would have turned away in despair. Thus, as office bearers you need to understand that you must personally treat each and every Lajna and Nasirat member with **affection, sincerity and consideration**. You must care for their feelings and should feel their pain as though it is your own pain. Even if someone speaks to you in a harsh or rude manner you should **control your emotions** and try to reform them with love and kindness and eliminate all forms of malice or resentment from your minds. Seek to reform others with your heart, rather than pushing them even further away with anger. With great emotion, the Promised Messiah^{as} once said that sometimes when he observed the state of his Jama'at it caused him deep sorrow and grief because it was not at the spiritual level it ought to be. However, he said that upon remembering the promises of God Almighty his despair transformed into a state of hope, optimism and happiness. Thus, we must make every effort to uphold the expectations and desires of the Promised Messiah^{as}. In particular the Lajna office bearers, who have

varying roles and responsibilities, should strive to bring about revolutionary spiritual changes in their own conditions so that they can come to alleviate the anguish of the Promised Messiah^{as} and become recipients of the rewards Allah has promised His Jama'at. **A very important and key point made by the Promised Messiah^{as} was that his followers should not limit themselves to mere words, but rather it was of paramount importance that they actually purified and reformed themselves.** Therefore, you need to pay great attention towards this, and it is for this reason that I have recently delivered a number of Friday Sermons on the subject of practical reformation; everyone should keep them in view.

Tree of Islam:

Only when we focus on improving ourselves can we actually fulfil the purpose of the advent of the Promised Messiah^{as}. What were the Promised Messiah's^{as} expectations and hopes for us? To give one beautiful example, the Promised Messiah^{as} described Islam as a tree and said that you are the branches of this tree and so it is up to you to protect it steadfastly with your positive example. He said that not only are you the branch of the tree, but you are also its protector and guardian. And so we need to be steadfast in our own efforts and we need to be strong in our faith and then seek to develop these qualities in others. First of all, it is the duty of office bearers to acquire these qualities and then spread them amongst others. In this way, one after the other, pious examples will be established and so the tree of Islam will be protected forever and will continue to flourish and grow. The Promised Messiah^{as} has taught us the ways to protect and safeguard this

tree by saying it is by becoming an exemplary true Muslim. And he said that the way to achieve this is by studying the Holy Qur'an and making every effort to act upon its pure teachings. The Promised Messiah^{as} has further added that the second way to protect the tree is to spread whatever goodness and virtues you develop to others. Thus, if you develop any good habits or qualities then you should make every effort to instil those virtues in other Ahmadis with whom you have contact or influence. As I said before, the way to do this is through love and kindness. Also remember, it is not only your duty to do the Tarbiyyat of the members of the Jama'at, but in fact another huge responsibility with which you have been entrusted is Tabligh. And so you must spread Islam's true and beautiful teachings far and wide. The way to do this is to become positive role models and examples for others to follow. **It should not be that you just hear or repeat the stories of the old companions of the Holy Prophet^{sa} – but you should also follow in their footsteps and become like them. Then and only then, will you will become a means of strengthening the tree of Islam.** May Allah the Almighty enable you to act in this way and to return to your homes from this refresher course with a new spirit and energy to carry out your duties. May Allah help you to reform yourselves and to bring about a spiritual revolution in your respective Majlis, whether it is large or small in size. May Allah make you successful in all your efforts and may He continue to bless Lajna Imai'llah abundantly."

Address to
Lajna Imai'llah
at the National Ijtema
Lajna Imai'llah UK
delivered on
26th October 2014

After reciting Tashahhud, T'awwuz and Surah Al-Fatihah, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} said:

"Before I start my address I want to make something clear. Sadr Sahiba Lajna Imaillah presented a centenary gift and I thought that it should be given to the UK Jama'at for their projects. But my afterthought, which I think is a better decision, is that I should give this amount to Lajna Imaillah UK to be utilised for the purchase of their own property, because now every auxiliary organisation is now trying to buy their own properties wherein they can hold their functions. Lajna Imaillah also need their own property and so I think it is a better and appropriate decision to use this amount in this fund. If a fund has already been raised this amount can be included in that, or if Lajna have not yet decided to raise any funds for the purchase of such a property, they should start it with this amount. I hope that Lajna Imaillah UK will try to purchase their own property in the near future InshaAllah.

Status of Lajna Imaillah:

With the Grace of Allah today the Lajna Imaillah UK Ijtim'a is reaching its conclusion. On many occasions I have reminded you about the very important and esteemed status of Lajna Imaillah in the Ahmadiyya Jama'at. If we look simply in terms of the numbers, the number of women in our Jama'at exceeds the number of men, and this trend is also reflected more generally amongst the world's population. The fact that Lajna has such an important and prominent position in our Jama'at requires that all of their activities are based upon that teaching which was revealed to the Holy Prophet^{sa} in the shape of the Holy Qur'an. As you are all aware, in this era Allah

the Almighty sent the Promised Messiah^{as} to re-establish and rejuvenate that pure and original teaching. All of you are therefore most fortunate that Allah has give you the ability to accept the Imam of the Age and to enter his fold. Always remember that where the Qur'an has placed responsibilities or even certain restrictions upon women, it has also established countless rights of women. Where Allah has said He will reward all good and virtuous acts, He has not said that such rewards are only due to men, rather He has said that both men and women will be rewarded in accordance with their righteous deeds. Therefore if Allah has prescribed some things, which in certain situations women may consider difficult or even restrictive, then the reward from Allah will also be far greater. For example, where Allah has given the commandment to observe purdah, He has also stated that God is He Who is forgiving and merciful, and God's compassion, mercy and love will rain down upon those women who follow His commands. Furthermore, **Allah has said that He has commanded women to observe purdah because it is a means of attaining falaah.** This one word has so many meanings and so many positive connotations. To name just a few, falaah means prosperity, success and the attainment of that which a person's heart desires or seeks. It means happiness and tranquillity, and it means safety and security. Falaah also means a permanent state of blessings and true comfort and satisfaction of life. From these meanings of the word falaah it becomes clear just how benevolent and loving Allah is, whereby the reward for following just one of His commands is so vast and manifold. Indeed, Allah has said the reward for observing just this one command will be

permanent safety and security and a lifetime of blessings, both in this life and the hereafter. What can be a greater means of happiness for a lady then for her to know that by simply following this one command she can obtain so much in return. In terms of purdah if women observe it properly then they are able to protect themselves from so many dangerous and distasteful situations. A non-Muslim lady wrote an article not long ago, which I have mentioned before, in which she said that men who are campaigning against hijab and fighting for this cause are not fighting for the rights of women. But rather only wish to satisfy their own lustful and indecent desires. Always remember that God has not given a single command without reason or purpose. **Every command of Allah is a means of benefit to the individual and to the society.** Allah's commands are a means of protection from the many dangers and obstacles that are placed in front of us in this life and are also a means of making sure we attain the very best rewards and blessings in the hereafter. As Ahmadis we are truly fortunate that the Promised Messiah^{as} has taught us the true way of Islam, which is of moderation. We are not like those fanatical Muslims who force their women to cover every inch of their faces and bodies so much so that they resemble thieves and robbers who try to conceal their identities. We are also not like those Muslims who in reaction to such severity have gone to the other extreme wherein they have removed even their scarves or dupattas and walk around immodestly, wearing so much makeup that it seems they are openly mocking this commandment of God. In fact, even in Pakistan we now see that they are making inappropriate clothes where there is not even a dupatta to accompany the shalwar

kameese. Thus, women and girls are walking publicly with their necks and chest areas openly on display. Such attire can only be classed as indecent and immodest. As I said before we **Ahmadis are following Islam's true teachings of moderation** and we are not like those rigid extremists who make women wear burqas in which even their eyes cannot be seen. Unfortunately such people do exist, and about this there was recently a joke whereby somebody made a cartoon depicting a car that was wearing a shuttle cock burqa with a full veil on the front – underneath was a caption that said the Taliban has given women permission to drive. Meaning that only if a car is wearing a burqa or is thoroughly covered can a women be allowed to drive. These are ridiculous things. Even though this was a joke, sadly this extremist attitude is prevalent amongst some of those who have not accepted the Promised Messiah^{as}. And so they follow completely wrong and senseless ideologies. The true teachings of Islam were presented by the Promised Messiah^{as}, who said very clearly that there is nothing wrong with taking women out of their homes, and that he himself went for walks with his wife, Hazrat Ummul Momineen^{ra}. He said that sometimes they walked on the paths and fields and he did not care for any person who said that such an act was wrong or sought to reproach him for this conduct. The Promised Messiah^{as} also said that from the Ahadith we see that the Holy Prophet^{sa} said that a person should enjoy and benefit from fresh air, however nowhere does it say that only men should benefit from the fresh air. Indeed, the Promised Messiah^{as} also said that staying constantly within the four walls of one home causes various illnesses. If we look at the example of the Holy Prophet^{sa} he

used to take Hazrat A'ishah^{ra} out with him and during wars she would accompany him and nurse the injured. Thus, Allah's commandment in regards to purdah must be kept in balance and moderation as both sides have lurched towards extremism. In Europe and the West generally, the society has become so free and immodest that adultery, indecency and wickedness are now prevalent. On the other side there are Muslims such as the examples of the Taliban I have given, who are so fanatical, that they even stop their women from leaving their homes. Thus, do not ever forget the favour Allah has bestowed on you by enabling you to accept the Promised Messiah^{as}, because he has shown us the true path.

Ba'ait is not just a verbal pledge:

As I said before, wherever Allah has prescribed anything he has also made it clear that the rewards for following his commands are vast and manifold and are granted both in this world and the next. When we realise this, does it not demand and make sense for us to live our lives according to the Will of God and to try and constantly improve our spiritual states. A few months ago I gave a series of sermons about practical reformation and I said that the key to practical reformation was to realise that no sin or wrongdoing should be considered small or insignificant; rather, everything that God has commanded we abstain from should be considered to be a sin, whether it is big or small. **Remember, it is seemingly small sins that open the door for larger sins and vices to creep in.** This is because when we do anything that is opposed to God's teachings we move away from Him. And when we move away from him we lose his blessings and protection from manifest

error. There are hundreds of millions of Muslims in the world and yet there are extremely few who are following the true teachings of the religion. The reason for this spiritual decline is that they have stopped giving any values to Islam's smaller commandments, and thus, over time they have moved completely away from their religion. But **we who have claimed to pledge allegiance to the Promised Messiah^{as} must always live our lives as Allah the Almighty desires.** The Promised Messiah^{as} has said that if a person has taken his Ba'ait then it is essential they understand that the Ba'ait is not just a verbal pledge but actually is a means of selling themselves entirely to their faith and so they should be ready to bear any humiliation or loss for the sake of their belief. The Promised Messiah^{as} said there were many people who having made a verbal pledge of Ba'ait did not fulfil the conditions of their covenant and so whenever they faced any problem they come to question God Almighty that why has something happened to them. He said such people think it is enough to simply claim to have done Ba'ait and then expect that they should never have to endure any hardship or difficulty. However the truth is that after doing Bai'at a person should seek to fulfil even the very smallest commands of God Almighty. We should always remember that the fundamental teaching a person has given a Muslim is to have belief in the unseen. To have belief in the unseen requires a firm faith in the life after death. And so we must keep in view this eternal life at all times. **To believe in the unseen requires us to believe that Allah is watching our every act and knows our every thought and he rewards or punishes us accordingly.** Therefore, if we do not follow his commands then we should

not feel aggrieved and say God should treat us better. Another great favour of the Promised Messiah^{as} was that he taught men should not seek to suppress or enforce their control over women. Rather he said that every man should follow the commands of Allah and in this way become an example to women. It should not be that men place undue restrictions on women and then become completely free themselves. Thus, the first command is on the men to live righteously and if they do so, then the women will naturally follow. If we look at the Qur'anic injunctions in relation purdah given in Surah Al-Nur – we find it says women should lower their gaze and observe purdah. However, even before this it says that men should lower their gaze as well. Thus, in a true Muslim society it is the men who have been commanded to establish their piety first of all. The women are told that if they follow this injunction they will be rewarded with falaah – that is security, and all the rewards I mentioned earlier, whilst the men are told that Allah is well aware of what they do. Thus this shows that **Allah is rewarding the women with His love and affection whilst the men have been given a stern warning that Allah knows what they do.** They have been warned that Allah will punish them if they do anything opposed to God's commands. The Promised Messiah^{as} once said that if women do not observe purdah and do not behave modestly, and freely mix with men, it is as if a person places some bread before a dog and expects that he would not take it. Thus, women should pay particular attention to protecting their own chastity and to saving themselves from the unrestrained looks of men. Always remember that Ahmadi women must protect their honour and dignity by observing hijab. In today's society there are

people from all walks and backgrounds and the majority of them do not understand the true status of a Muslim women. And so our women have to be extremely careful to protect their chastity and to keep their dignity and honour. As I said before the Promised Messiah^{as} taught that Bai'at is not just a verbal pledge to be repeated but requires an Ahmadi to constantly strive to improve. Thus, I say to all of our Ahmadi women and girls that they must seek to improve themselves in all respects and try to become ever closer to Allah. **Your spiritual improvement will not just benefit the current generation but will be a means of protecting our future generations** as it is in your laps that they are being raised, nurtured and trained. Furthermore, the Promised Messiah^{as} said every person who does Bai'at must understand the purpose of his pledge. They should ask themselves whether they have done Bai'at for the sake of the world or for the sake of attaining God's infinite bounty and rewards. The Promised Messiah^{as} said that unfortunately there were many people who had done Bai'at yet displayed no spiritual improvement and they remained without religious knowledge, spiritual understanding or insight. Their acts continued to be bereft of true beauty and piety and rather than excelling in virtue they were covering themselves in sin. Therefore, the Promised Messiah^{as} counselled the members of his Jama'at to remember that this was just a temporary life regardless of whether it is spent in ease or in difficulty, and will be gone within in a few days, months or years. He said the **next life was an eternal life and so every moment of this temporary life should be spent sowing the seeds for that permanent life in the hereafter**. The Promised Messiah^{as} has further taught

that to do Bai'at brings two great benefits. First of all it makes a person loved by God and this enables him or her to become pure, and to spiritually reform. The second benefit of doing Bai'at at the hand of God's chosen representative is that a person is shielded from satanic influences. Thus, we should constantly assess ourselves to see if we are saving ourselves from Satan and are instead purifying our hearts. We can only be saved from satanic influence when we pay attention to fulfilling the rights of God and following His commandments. Only if we are doing so can it be said that we are truly fulfilling the rights of our Bai'at. Most of you seated before me are born Ahmadis whose forefathers accepted Ahmadiyyat. The fact that their future generations continued to be attached to Ahmadiyyat and Khilafat is a sign that Allah accepted their prayers and righteous deeds. Remember that upon accepting Ahmadiyyat your forefathers had to face various difficulties and make sacrifices. In many cases they had to bear the opposition of their friends and families. You should always reflect on the fact that they were willing to leave aside the world and their loved ones for the sake of their faith. And of course many of your elders had to leave their homes in Pakistan due to the continued persecution they faced. However, such sacrifices are worthless if they are not accompanied by fulfilling the teachings of your religion and your Bai'at. Thus, all of you should strive to become noble examples for others to follow and whilst living in this Western society, you should become a means of saving the local people and guiding them to the truth. Your character and personalities should attract those around you so that you are means of portraying the beauty of true Islam in the society.

Today Islam is being attacked and defamed from all corners. And so it is the responsibility and task of the Jama'at of the Promised Messiah^{as} to respond to these unjust allegations. **It is the task of Ahmadis Muslims to wash away those false stains which are tarnishing Islam's reputation and instead to shine a bright light illustrating Islam's true and pristine teachings. But you can only do this when your own acts are of the highest order.** Only if you achieve such standards will your conduct be a proof that Islam is a true religion which is completely in keeping with human nature. As members of Lajna Imaillah it is particularly your responsibility to wash away the unjust allegations that, God forbid, that Islam advocates the harsh and cruel treatment of women. Today I have spoken particularly about purdah even though there are many other Islamic commandments, because it is often alleged that purdah takes away women's rights. However, we know that this is not the case and the truth is that **Purdah and Hijab actually establish the true dignity, independence and freedom of women.** Hijab does not only give a women physical security but is also a key means of giving them spiritual security and purity of heart. As I said before no commandment of Allah should be considered to be small or insignificant. Every commandment is important. Allah has said mankind should worship Him and that worship is the very purpose of creation. Worship requires us to pray five times a day and to remember Allah at all times. However apart from this, true worship also requires that every act of ours is conducted with the injunction of gaining God's pleasure. If this is our intention then our each and every act, whether big or small, becomes a form of worship. And so because God has

told women to look after their homes and to train their children, if they do so, then that too is classed as the worship of God. If God has said that women should protect their dignity and chastity and to get married to achieve this purpose, then that too is worship. There are so many other commands of Allah all of which if followed will be classed as the worship of God. If you live in a society where a certain instruction of Allah is looked down upon or mocked, but you continue to follow God's command, then you will attain even more blessings and reward from him and on account of your steadfastness. Thus, in this society you will surely be greatly rewarded for observing the proper standards of hijab. If you observe the proper standards, then you will become pure both from the outside and inside. When your clothes will be dignified it will naturally cause for pure feelings to enter your hearts and minds. When you wear good and proper clothing for the sake of God it will naturally follow that you will think of how else you can please him and you will seek more ways to live a pure and virtuous life. Always remember that our every act should be for the sake of Allah. And whatever is done for his sake, whether it is formal Salat or not, is classed as worship. Every Ahmadi should forever keep this in their minds. You should always be strong in your belief that the Ahmadiyya Jama'at is the Jama'at which Allah Himself has established and thus he is helping and supporting it in every possible way. Many women who are seated before me are those whom Allah Himself directed towards the truth of Ahmadiyyat and so they came to know that to seek God's blessings they had to enter the fold of the Promised Messiah^{as}. Having observed this year's Jalsa and the Bai'at ceremony and also after seeing the

first hand example of Ahmadiis, there were a number of people, including an English lady who decided to accept Ahmadiyyat. The way Allah is turning people's hearts, and inclining them towards Ahmadiyyat is a great proof that Allah desires for the Jama'at of the Promised Messiah^{as} to flourish and prosper. He desires this so that the true teachings and honour of Islam can be reestablished in every corner of the world. Allah's decree and support is with the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at. And if we wish to take advantage of this divine support then each of us must individually make our spiritual states in accordance with what the Promised Messiah^{as} desired from us. Remember that the Promised Messiah^{as} said that there were two parts to the Bai'at. One part is that of faith and belief itself. He warned of the dangers of innovations in faith, Bidaat, and said that this community should protect themselves from all such things. He further explained that innovations could be manifest in many different ways, which took people away from the true essence of their faith. For example, to disregard hijab due to a fear of other people, or to satisfy the desires of others, to spend extravagant amounts on their weddings or combining prayer without any reasons, these are all Bidaats. The Promised Messiah^{as} said these were all examples of innovations that took mankind away from their faith and away from God and actually corrupted the faith as well. He taught that the second part of this covenant with him is to practically act on Islam's teachings and beliefs. He said it was not enough to merely recite the Kalimah, otherwise there would be no need for the Qur'an to be so long and detailed. Giving a very beautiful analogy the Promised Messiah^{as} said that belief is like a garden

quilled with the most gardens and fruits, whilst the most practical part of faith was like the clear water through which the garden is maintained and nourished. He said that no matter how beautiful the garden was, it would ultimately be ruined if it became bereft of water, and so in the same way it is necessary to practically follow the teachings of one's faith. No matter how strong the teaching is, if it is not practically followed, then Satan will come and corrupt it. The Promised Messiah^{as} said that this was what happened after the third century of Islam whereby over time Muslims forgot their teachings. And so despite the fact that the Qur'an continued to exist faith itself was wiped away from their hearts. Now this era is the time of the Promised Messiah^{as} and so in the same way those who do not follow his teachings will find that their faith weakens and will eventually be completely removed from their hearts. Allah has promised the Promised Messiah^{as} that true Islam will be re-established in the world through him and it is for this reason that our Jama'at was established. We should always consider this very purpose to be the objective of our lives and therefore we must follow Islam's true teachings to the best of our abilities. Allah's support is such that we see time and again how Allah's blessings are with the members of the Jama'at and many of you will have witnessed this for yourselves. I shall now give just a few examples. An Ahmadi lady from Canada wrote her experience of Purdah. She said that after completing her studies with a good qualification she struggled to get a job because of the fact that she observed proper Purdah. She said that she made a promise to herself that no matter what she would not compromise her Purdah. She did later get some jobs but had

to leave them due to the work restrictions on Hijab. Anyway, for the sake of Allah she was willing to forsake the world and there is no doubt that Allah will bless and reward her greatly for this sacrifice. May Allah reward her. Another lady, Maria Sahiba, a German woman, wrote that upon accepting Ahmadiyyat she started to observe Hijaab. She worked in a hospital in Germany and the administration said that for hygienic reasons she should stop observing Hijab. She wrote to me for prayer and I wrote back praying that may Allah provide such circumstances that allow her to work in peace and comfort. In the end she was forced to resign from her job as the hospital administration would not change their demands. However, she did not weaken in her faith and it so happened that soon Allah blessed her with an even better job Alhamdulillah. An Ahmadi lady from Bangladesh, Siddiqa Sahiba, who was an engineer at a private company expressed a desire to attend the UK Jalsa Salana in 2011 and so requested leave from her work. When her company administrators realised that she was an Ahmadi and travelling to meet her Khalifah in London and attend the Jalsa Salana they pressured her to resign, which she did. Having done so she wrote to me for prayers, and thereafter Allah rewarded her for her strong faith. She said that even though it is normally very difficult to find work in Bangladesh, she was able to attain a better and excellent job without any difficulty on the basis of a simple online application. Therefore, how Allah blesses and rewards those who seek to follow the teachings of their faith and who are ready for sacrifice. This is the true meaning of the words of the Bai'at, which say that "I will give precedence to my faith over all worldly objects."

Remember, Allah will never allow any sacrifice, no matter how large or small, to go to waste or to be in vein. Similarly, a person who faces any form of persecution or opposition due to being an Ahmadi, will find that Allah will reward them greatly for their patience and steadfastness. These examples prove that Allah's help is with the Ahmadiyya Jama'at and should motivate us to follow the teachings of our faith and to always give precedence to our faith over all worldly matters. Only then can we be considered a true Ahmadi. I say again that you should never consider any part of your faith or any command of God to be insignificant. All commands are equally important because they lead to God's rewards and nearness. May Allah enable all of you to follow every aspect of your faith in the very best manner. May all of you, whilst living in this society, continue to protect your honour and modesty and become great examples of piety for others to follow. May all of you inculcate the true spirit of Ahmadiyya into your future generations. May all of you through your conduct disprove those who say that Islam treats women in the wrong way. In fact may all of you prove to the world that the women and girls of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at are shining examples of Islam's true teachings and are those who understand the true meaning of freedom through which a woman's honour and dignity is established. Let me end by narrating a small incident from this year's Jalsa. A female journalist, who is a Christian came and observed the Jalsa, and in a very respectful manner, even wore a scarf. She spent a good deal of time in the ladies side and met number of our Lajna members. Afterwards she said that she used to think that perhaps Muslim women were not free and that the

segregation was somewhat cruel. But having spent time amongst the Ahmadi ladies she now considered that our women were more respected and valued than any others. In fact, she admitted that she had never felt such value as a woman in her own Church. She said that she came to understand the benefit of being able to walk around in an environment where there were no men present and felt freedom from this. Therefore, **there is no need for any of our ladies or girls to feel any form of complex about Hijaab.** Remember, we are the people who have to show the right path to others. It is not for us to follow them. Thus these are the standards you should adopt. May Allah enable you to do so that the entire world becomes aware of the true Islam and the real freedom it has granted to women. May Allah bless Lajna Imaillah in all respects, Ameen. There are quite a number of ladies who cannot understand English and so I also would like to say some things to them. Many of you have come in recent years from Pakistan or from Germany and settled here. Virtually all from Germany or Pakistan are those Lajna who did not enjoy religious freedom in their countries and thus were forced to leave. Allah has permitted migration for the sake of one's faith and in fact He says that those who face persecution and injustice because of their religion and leave their country will be given the best reward and their circumstances will be improved. And everyone is aware that, with the Grace of Allah, virtually all of you are in a better situation than before after migrating here. This was not the result of any quality or merit on your part and thus you should think that you were granted permission to reside here due to your personal capabilities or worth. Here these countries have

been bestowed with Allah's blessings and grace, because they make efforts and work hard and value education. Education has thus created better circumstances in these countries. It cannot be said regarding most of the Lajna who came here from Pakistan or Germany, that they were so highly talented or skilled that it compelled the British Government to grant them asylum and a place to live. All that you have received is because of Ahmadiyyat and because you were facing persecution in your country. Those who came here recently from Germany, originally came to Germany from Pakistan for the same reason that they were denied religious freedom. Thus, always remember that the reward and blessing you have from Allah and your circumstances which continue to improve, are purely because of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at. After entering the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at, as I have explained to the English-speaking Lajna, you should always bear in mind that you must fulfil the right of your Bai'at. The Promised Messiah^{as} has said the due of the Bai'at can be discharged when you practically act upon the teachings of Islam. It is when you practically **adopt the authority of the Holy Qur'an in your lives**. The Qur'an has given a multitude of commands. In one place the Promised Messiah^{as} has said that there are 700 commands, whilst elsewhere he has mentioned a different number of commandments, yet nonetheless he has spoken of 700 commands in the Holy Qur'an. If we read the Qura'nic injunctions but do not strive to implement them then we will fail to benefit from the Bai'at in the way that has been decreed by Allah for those who take the Bai'at. Thus constantly look over your state and condition. Allah says to worship Him, safeguard your prayers and the prayers of your

children and protect and uphold the dignity, modest and chastity of your girls. Strive to fulfil the rights of your husbands and children in your homes. Sometimes quarrels break out in homes upon the smallest matters and the elder mothers and mother-in-laws play a significant part in causing such arguments. There are some ladies who rather than create peace and tranquillity, destroy the homes of their sons and daughters. I say to them **that Islam teaches to show tolerance and patience**. They should not react to trivial matters by acting with even more injustice than was committed. You should bear all of these points in mind. As I have said, God has commanded us to worship. In addition to Salaat, 'worship' includes all the other commandments. When you perform the rest of the injunctions of God to attain His pleasure, then Allah will count those among 'worship'. Thus demonstrate your practical examples for your children, for the nation and for the future progeny. It is your responsibility to carry out the Tarbiyyat of the children, because you will have to make even greater efforts in today's society. Progress in your spirituality, which should shine forth through your practical examples. Give maximum heed to the moral upbringing of your children. Bidaat (innovations) are more common among the elder ladies in these countries. When many of them became affluent they started unnecessary innovations and customs at weddings. There is over-emphasis on clothes and jewellery. With the Grace of Allah, most Ahmadi Lajna are at the forefront of financial sacrifices. In fact some ladies draw the attention of men to giving Chanda, and even contribute more than the men themselves. Thus everyone should endeavour to emulate those Lajna who truly give precedence to their

faith over all worldly matters. You should not immerse yourselves in worldly matters in these countries and drown in materialism. If you only yearn for worldly things, then certainly you may attain them in this life, but you will receive no reward in the hereafter, as I explained with reference to the Promised Messiah^{as}. Thus it is the duty and obligation of an Ahmadi woman that she should strive to perform her every action for the sake of Allah so she can receive reward both in this world and in the next. I will say once again and I will say this repeatedly, that assess your own state and condition and also pay great attention to the Tarbiyyat of your children.

May Allah enable you to do so. Now join me in silent prayer

Address to
Waqfaat-e-Nau
at the National Ijtema
Waqfaat-e-Nau UK
delivered on
28th February 2015

After reciting *Tashahhud*, *Ta`awwuz* and *Surah al-Fatihah*, His Holiness, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} said:

‘With the grace of Allah Almighty, the Waqfaat-e-Nau *Ijtema* was held today and is reaching its conclusion.

A good proportion of Waqfaat-e-Nau have reached an age where they are able to make their own decisions and choices in life. This is why, I directed the Waqf-e-Nau department that the girls who are above the age of 15 should now decide for themselves whether or not they wish to continue with the pledge of *Waqf* that was made by their parents.

Waqf-e-Nau is not merely a title:

To be a member of Waqf-e-Nau is not merely a title one holds, rather, it in fact entails a responsibility. Therefore, you should not be content simply by the fact that you have the honour of being in the fold of Waqf-e-Nau. Instead, you should **try to understand the responsibilities upon you as a member of Waqf-e-Nau.**

You should be aware of the duties and tasks you are expected to perform and the behaviour and conduct you need to display. You should know the appropriate type of clothing to wear and what the standard of your *pardah* should be.

You should also be aware of the type of education you should attain, second, and how that education can be utilised for the best interest of the Jama’at. If this is not the case, then to simply hold the title of Waqf-e-Nau will hold no value. There should be a clear distinction between a Waqf-e-Nau and a non Waqf-e-Nau Ahmadi girl.

The parents of normal Ahmadi girls do not pledge that they will sacrifice their child for the sake of their religion. A normal Ahmadi girl does not have to renew a bond that she will present herself for the sake of serving her religion and that she will try to acquire education in a manner that will be best for the Jama'at. Or, in other words, that she will acquire an education according to the Jama'at's requirements.

The Jama'at requires doctors, teachers, translators, journalists, and also those skilled in a range of other fields; those are appropriate and suitable for the Ahmadi girls. The Jama'at needs members who make sacrifices to carry out the *tarbiyyat* and training of the children in such a manner that they become excellent and beneficial individuals for the Jama'at. Although every Ahmadi girl should realise this responsibility of excellent *tarbiyyat* and training in order to become beneficial to the Jama'at, a Waqf-e-Nau girl has a far greater responsibility in this respect.

You will not be able to develop this spirit and state until you strive to your utmost to lead your lives according to the teachings given to us by Allah Ta'ala. Thus, whilst girls are required to acquire secular education to become doctors, teachers, translators, and also to enter various other fields, as I have said earlier, there is also an expectation alongside this of **Waqf-e-Nau girls to attain the highest standard of religious education.**



I often draw the attention of the women of the Jama'at in general that in order to properly take care of the future generations, Ahmadi women need to enhance their religious knowledge and know their traditions so that through this, the

future generations can remain attached to the Jama'at. Thus, it is clear just how far and wide reaching the duty of a Waqf-e-Nau girl stretches.

Here in Europe, Allah has given you the opportunity to acquire the highest standard of secular education. However, there is also a threat alongside this of bad habits developing which may clash with Islamic morals and traditions. And so, you need to protect yourselves from this danger.

It is said by some that here in European society it is very difficult to observe *pardah*, to wear the *hijab*, or cover one's head; to adopt modest clothing or not to make friendships with boys. They say that if we do all of this, then students and children will tease and mock us in our college, school or university.

First of all, every Ahmadi girl needs to dispel this **feeling of apprehension that boys or girls in this society will make fun** of them after seeing the modest clothes they wear, their *hijab* or the fact that they choose not to befriend boys. However, a Waqf-e-Nau girl should far exceed others in this standard and give even greater attention towards this because it is they who must set the correct and proper Islamic examples for others.

Women's education:

Islam does not forbid anyone from attaining an education. As I said before, the Jama'at has a great need for doctors, teachers, translators, language experts and also those trained in various other fields. Naturally, this standard can only be acquired by attaining an education. However, when acquiring

this education, we would also have to uphold our moral standard and maintain our limits.

Certainly, Islam says that no Muslim, man or woman, should remain ignorant; rather, they should indeed attain education. This is why the Holy Prophet^{sa} gave special attention and consideration to women's education.

Drawing attention to women's education, the Holy Prophet^{sa} also said that **half of the religion should be learned from Aishah^{ra}**. Here, the Holy Prophet^{sa} has not stated for women alone to acquire this education from Hazrat Aishah^{ra}, but rather, he has given advice in general to attain knowledge of half of the religion from her. Hence, at times, Hazrat Aishah^{ra} would even take classes from behind a curtain, and she would impart her knowledge and teachings at gatherings which men would also attend.

And so, this makes it very clear that in the spread of knowledge Islam has not discriminated between men and women, and thus, to acquire and convey knowledge is the obligation of every Muslim. For a believing woman, it is important to acquire wisdom, implement and convey it, and especially use it for the training of her children. Indeed, the Holy Prophet^{sa} said that you should train your children in the best possible manner. Further, the Holy Prophet^{sa} also said that wisdom is like the lost belonging of a believer. Wherever it is found he or she should grab hold of it.

Hence, our women and girls, and in particular the Waqfaat-e-Nau should attain the highest standard of education and then they should strive to use that knowledge to give benefit to the world.

It is also a favour of Allah on the Jama'at that through the blessings of Khilafat, He established an organisation for the training of women which gives them the opportunity to hold events and programmes freely and conveniently. These programmes are not only for training in religious education, but also to improve physical health, to help serve humanity as well as for other activities. Thus, you, the Waqfaat-e-Nau, are also part of this organisation. In other words, you are members of Lajna Ima'illah.

Being Waqfaat-e-Nau **does not mean that you are exempt from Lajna Ima'illah or Nasirat** and are outside their fold. Lajna Ima'illah and Nasirat are fundamental organisations and so it is necessary to attend their events and functions. In fact, the Waqfaat-e-Nau should take part in the programmes of Lajna Ima'illah and Nasirat to an even greater degree than other normal Ahmadi girls because you are those who have completely dedicated yourselves for the service of their religion.

Hence, you should channel your thoughts by keeping the principle in mind that you will strive to perform your every task **giving precedence to your faith over worldly matters**. And when you adopt this mentality, the thought can never emerge in your minds that due to the attitude of certain superior office bearers, you wish to excuse yourself from any task or responsibility you have been given. Instead, your way of thinking will be that whatever the attitude or behaviour of an office holder is, as a *Waqfa-e-Zindagi*, I will display complete obedience and uphold the spirit of my Waqf, utilising all my abilities and capabilities to serve my religion.

You may feel certain office holders are dealing with you in an inappropriate manner or that they are not utilising you for work properly. However, this should never lead you to asking to take leave from a task or duty.

I also want to draw your attention to the fact that many of you have reached a mature age, are now married and with the blessings of Allah the Almighty have children, and at the same time are also serving the Jama'at. But remember, that your first and primary obligation is to give full care and attention to the *tarbiyyat* and training of your children who are being brought up by you. However, alongside this, you should also spare some time to serve the Jama'at and to serve in any capacity of work given to you by the Jama'at. Never let the thought emerge in your heart that our capabilities are not being utilised properly and we could have been given a better opportunity to serve.

Irrespective of whether you are given a responsibility that is applicable to your education or not, you must **serve the Jama'at to the best of your ability**. You should always remember that the purpose of attaining education is to enlighten and illuminate your minds so that you carry out the training and upbringing of your children in a suitable and appropriate manner. It should never come into your mind that you must be given work which is relevant to your education. Rather, service to the Jama'at with complete dedication must be your sole purpose.

Indeed, if you are given any responsibility which is applicable to your qualifications, then it will simply be a positive point

that you are being given an opportunity to demonstrate your capabilities.

***Waqf* will be beneficial:**

Thus, today I will say briefly to the Waqfaat-e-Nau that by just gathering for the *Ijtema*, taking part in the competition or listening to speeches alone will not enable you to achieve your objectives. You will only achieve your aim and goal when you come to understand the true spirit of *Waqf* and use all of your capabilities entirely for the sake of serving Jama'at Ahmadiyya. **Your *Waqf* will only prove to be of benefit** when those of you who are married carry out the *tarbiyyat* and training of your children in an excellent manner. Your *Waqf* will be beneficial only when you carry out even the smallest tasks and duties you are given with utmost satisfaction and happiness.

Your *Waqf* will be of use only when our attire and clothing is according to the true Islamic dress code. Your *Waqf* will bear fruit only when you read and understand the Promised Messiah^{as}'s teachings and then make it a part of your lives. Your *Waqf* will be beneficial only when you try to lead your lives according to the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, that is, the practice of the Holy Prophet^{sa}. And your *Waqf* will be truly beneficial when you establish a **living connection with Allah Ta'ala**. Thus, search for the commandments of Allah and strive to act upon them at all times.

***Libas-e-Taqwa*:**

Always safeguard and protect your prayers. You should form your outer appearance and state in accordance to the

teachings of Islam. Fashion and new types of clothing should not be your aim, but rather, you should follow the command of Allah to adopt the real type of covering, which is ***Libas-e-Taqwa***. If you keep yourself covered with the garb of *taqwa*, righteousness, then you will constantly be trying to attain the pleasure of Allah. And when your objective will be solely to win God's pleasure, you will act exactly in the way that Allah the Almighty has commanded. The world will not be your goal, but rather, your faith and religion will hold greatest importance for you.

Once you adopt *Libas-e-Taqwa* in this Western society, you will not be disturbed or upset when people poke fun at you and say, "look at that girl wearing *hijab* or observing *purdah* and wearing modest attire." Instead, you will always keep the commands of Allah in view, and you will feel proud that you are adopting the *Libas-e-Tawqa*.

In this same way, the younger girls should also remember that from childhood they should start to form a habit and develop their conduct in a way which can guide you in your lives. You should constantly try to reform yourself according to the teachings of Islam to enable you to maintain your faith and religion.

Thus, never miss saying your prayers. Always give attention towards your education. Instead of always chasing after the latest fashion in clothes, you should show greater concern for whether your clothing is suitable and modest. It is wrong to think that up to the ages of five, or six, or seven, it is fine for a child to wear frocks, dresses, or purely European style clothing such as short blouses or jeans. In fact, you would have to

develop the habit from even earlier age of wearing clothes which cover your body appropriately. Thus, you should **develop modesty within yourselves**

In your friendship, you should be mindful; do not befriend people who take you away from your religion. Instead, you should befriend those who are decent and sincere, rather than those who are immodest and shameless.

You need to give full attention to your education. You should try to listen to your parents when they advise and train you with reference to religious teachings and the traditions of the Jama'at.

And remember, that if any question arises in your mind, then without any hesitation, you should write to me.

May Allah the Almighty enable all of you to become proper Waqfaat-e-Nau and to become excellent and beneficial members of the Jama'at. *Ameen.*

Address to
Lajna Ima'illah
at the National Ijtema
Lajna Ima'illah UK,
delivered on
25th October 2015

Women's Responsibilities: Fulfilling the Conditions of Bai'at

After reciting Tashahhud, Ta'awuz and Surah Al-Fatihah, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} said:

"With the Grace of Allah, today the national Ijtema of *Lajna Imaillah* UK is reaching its conclusion. You, who are the members of *Lajna Imaillah*, are those ladies and girls who have accepted the Imam of the Age, the Promised Messiah^{as}. Always remember that the Jama'at founded by the Promised Messiah^{as} is that Jama'at, which according to the commands of Allah given in the Holy Qur'an and according to the prophecies of the Holy Prophet of Islam^{sa}, was to be established in the latter days. At the time of the Promised Messiah^{as} the written text of the Holy Qur'an was preserved in its original form and there were still vast numbers of people who called themselves Muslims in the world. There were a vast number of people who had memorised the Holy Qur'an. However, in truth the vast majority had completely forgotten the true teachings of the Holy Qur'an. Thus, Allah the Almighty sent the Promised Messiah^{as} to establish a Community who would once again manifest the true teachings of Islam in the world. Indeed, the Promised Messiah^{as} said that Allah desires for his Jama'at to be an example to all others. He explained that to be an example means that when others see or hear you, they are influenced and seek to imitate what they have witnessed.

So today you are those people who, having entered the fold of the Promised Messiah^{as}, have pledged to live your lives according to Islam's true teachings and to spread them far and wide. On another occasion the Promised Messiah^{as} said that his followers should forsake all types of personal desires and emotions, because having claimed to be Ahmadis and having claimed to follow the true teaching of Islam, others would surely look at them extremely critically. He said that others will assess the standards of his followers and so it was imperative that Ahmadi Muslims maintained the very highest standards of morals and kept only good habits. He said his followers must always follow the commands of Allah so that no one could cast aspersions on them, or say that they were not good Muslims or there was no difference between Ahmadis and others. Therefore, every Ahmadi, man and woman, should understand their heavy responsibilities. If they do not set a positive example to others then it will not only reflect badly upon them, but upon the entire Jama'at.

Whether a person is a member of *Lajna Imaillah*, *Khuddamul Ahmadiyya* or *Majlis Ansarullah*, they must always seek to abide by the true teachings of Islam. Certainly, if their own examples are weak then their *Tabligh* and efforts to convey true Islam will have no impact and no one will listen to them. The Promised Messiah^{as} has also said that if his Community wishes to be considered a true Jama'at then it is essential that all members set aside their personal desires and wishes for the sake of their faith.

Three types of people:

Indeed, on countless occasions the Promised Messiah^{as} has given us instructions and most beautiful guidance that we must always keep in view. ***Lajna Imaillah* includes the books of the Promised Messiah^{as} in its educational syllabus** and many members do read them, and some even give test papers about them. We also regularly quote the books of the Promised Messiah^{as} at *Jalsas* [Annual Conventions] and *Ijtemas* [Gatherings] in our addresses and speeches.

However the real question is, to what extent are we acting upon his words and his instructions? For example, the Promised Messiah^{as} said that every Ahmadi should read his book *Kishti-e-Noah* (Ark of Noah) repeatedly. This book also contains a lot of guidance for Ahmadi women, because the Promised Messiah^{as} has written about the qualities and virtues that women should seek and how they should live their lives. Remember, there are three types of people. Firstly, there are people who do not have knowledge or information and so if they make mistakes they can be forgiven. Secondly, those people who have knowledge of what is right and yet still act in the wrong way and so they will obviously be held to account for their actions. The third type of people are those who have knowledge of what is right but knowingly act contrary to those teachings whilst still instructing others to reform themselves. This can only be classed as pure hypocrisy. It is therefore essential that before looking at others, every Ahmadi Muslim looks at himself and assesses his or her own state. They must question if they are truly following the teachings of the Promised Messiah^{as}, they must truthfully

assess whether they are abstaining from immorality and sin? First and foremost, it is the duty of the Jama'at and *Lajna* office bearers to spiritually and morally reform themselves.

Office bearers must realise their personal responsibilities:

Only if they pay attention to this can they ensure the *Tarbiyyat* and moral training of other Ahmadis and set an example for others to follow. However, if office bearers do not uphold the correct standards it will negatively impact the entire Jama'at. So again I reiterate that first of all the office bearers must realise their personal responsibilities and look at their own standards. Our system is such that if every office bearer from the grass roots level to the regional and national levels is able to bring about a positive change in themselves, automatically it will mean that around 50% of our membership will be those who are following the true teachings of Islam. They will be a means of inspiring our young girls and other members towards goodness and virtue. They will show others that giving precedence to your faith over all worldly matters means to set aside your personal desires for the sake of Allah the Almighty. I have already mentioned that the Promised Messiah^{as} said that it was essential that Ahmadis read his books for the sake of their own moral training. He also said that it was imperative that every Ahmadi reads the Holy Qur'an repeatedly and sought to understand its true meanings and to live their lives according to its commandments. Furthermore, the Promised Messiah^{as} said it

was essential to seek the nearness of Allah the Almighty and the way to do this is to develop a great love of worship and prayer within one's home.

As mothers you can only inculcate a love of worship within your children when you yourself fulfil the rights of worship and perform all your prayers, and manifest true devotion to God. The Promised Messiah^{as} has repeatedly counselled the members of his Jama'at to show love and compassion to each other because without this the unity of our Jama'at will be compromised. He taught that each Ahmadi should display true love and affection to others and that if they did so, Allah would show love to them. Certainly Allah's love is the means to true peace and contentment. Therefore, always seek to spread compassion and kindness within society.

You should not just hope for the best for yourself and your families, but should desire that all people are able to love with peace, security and in comfort. We claim to show love for all and so our love should not just be exhibited towards others but we must display love amongst ourselves. Thus, do not speak ill of others but instead help and care for one another.

Do not spread rumours or highlight the weaknesses of others, rather share their burdens and try to remove their difficulties and provide ease for them. Always remember that Allah has said in the Qur'an that true believers are those who maintain a spirit of compassion and sympathy. And so those who wish to be counted amongst true believers and who wish to follow the true teachings of the Holy Qur'an must always display love, empathy and kindness. If you respect others and

are openhearted you will see that many bad habits such as speaking ill of others will naturally die away and this is extremely important in today's society.

Conditions of *Bai'at*:

Recently, I laid the foundation stone for a new mosque both in Holland and in Germany. In both countries female non-Muslim guests commented that what the Khalifah has said is excellent and is a means of spreading peace and love in the world. However, they also said that they would now wait and see if the Ahmadis lived up to his words and followed these beautiful teachings. Therefore, do not have any doubt that people's eyes are on you and they wish to see if Ahmadis practise what they preach. Thus, all Ahmadis and all *Lajna* members must understand the expectations that the Promised Messiah^{as} had of us and try our utmost to fulfil them so that we can be ambassadors of true Islam. With great anguish the Promised Messiah^{as} also said that until an Ahmadi understands the reality of what is meant and required by their *Bai'at* they cannot attain true freedom and salvation. He said that we should not just superficially note the words of the *Bai'at*, but should seek to understand its true essence and meaning. He said that only when an Ahmadi truly understands what *Bai'at* represents can they fulfil its requirements.

Regarding the conditions of *Bai'at*, I gave a series of sermons that were later published as a book and earlier this year I also gave a sermon about how to live your life in light of the conditions of *Bai'at*. These are all easily available. Certainly we should constantly reflect upon the conditions of our pledge

and the *Lajna* administration should also ensure that the requirements and conditions of *Bai'at* are discussed and taught at *Lajna* events and meetings.

If we look at the very first condition of *Bai'at*, each Ahmadi **pledges to avoid all forms of *Shirk*, which is associating partners with Allah.** There are actually many types of *Shirk*, and so we must avoid them at all costs. In our daily lives things that may be considered as relatively insignificant can also be classified as *Shirk* and so we must be extremely watchful. For example, if you praise someone in order to fulfil your own purpose or to gain benefit, it is a form of *Shirk*. Another example is where a person pursues his own personal desires to such an extent that he forgets the duties he owes to Allah.

Another condition of *Bai'at* is that an Ahmadi must avoid all forms of falsehood. It is not enough to only forgo deceit, but it is also the duty of an Ahmadi to establish truth. If all our Ahmadi women sought to abandon all forms of falsehood collectively and to establish nothing but truth, it would lead to the widespread reformation of the members of our Jama'at. This is because our women train their children and if they are able to inculcate the importance of truth within them it will have a huge, a long-lasting effect, *InshaAllah* [God-Willing].

The Promised Messiah^{as} has also said that **Ahmadis should abstain from saying anything that can cause conflict or disturbance to others.** Repeatedly he spoke about how we should never seek to usurp the rights of others or to act unjustly. The Promised Messiah^{as} spoke about the importance of obedience and to abide by the *Nizaam* of the Jama'at. Thus

there is a great responsibility on each Ahmadi to obey the Khalifah of the time and through him the *Nizaam* of the Jama'at. The Promised Messiah^{as} has said his followers should seek to suppress their personal aspirations, because Satan uses such desires to try and push people into the wrong direction.

This too is an extremely important teaching that you should always keep in view. In the conditions of *Bai'at* the Promised Messiah^{as} also stipulated that an **Ahmadi must never seek to cause pain or harm to anyone whether they are Ahmadi or not.** Always remember that the conditions of *Bai'at* and the instructions of the Promised Messiah^{as} are the means for true salvation and are the means of peace and harmony in our lives. These are the values that are required more than ever in today's society. These are the means for bringing people closer to their Creator. They are the means of establishing peace in our homes. It is these values that we must treasure and inculcate into our children so that our future generations grow to become those who value their faith and who bear the highest moral standards. These are the values we must instil in our children so they prove to be shining examples of Islam's true teachings.

Islamic principles and values:

In my recent tour I spoke about these Islamic values at a function in Germany and upon hearing my words a local German lady said she was extremely delighted to hear that these were Islamic principles and values. She said there was no doubt that such values were the keys to peace both in a

person's home and in the wider society. She said these were the very values she wished to instil in her children. However, unfortunately in school sometimes they taught things contrary to this in the name of freedom. **All of you who are part of *Lajna Imaillah*, who claim to be the servants of Allah, must therefore understand your responsibilities towards your children!** You must establish the very highest standards and values within your homes. You must act according to Allah's commands. This is of particular importance considering you are living in a society where it is easy for our children to be misled or misguided.

Sometimes children can pick up wrong things or habits from their schools or outside. And so you must give ample time to your children. You must explain to them what is right and what is wrong. You must instil within them those values that are to be cherished and protected. You must explain Islamic teachings to them and tell them that these are the commands of Allah and it was to re-establish these values that Allah sent the Promised Messiah^{as}.

Reformation of the world:

In terms of their school education, of course you should encourage your children to learn and to attain the highest standards. However, if in the name of freedom the schools ever teach things that are contrary to Islam then you should explain clearly to your children what our values and beliefs are. This is a great responsibility laid before you, because one day the world's reformation will be the task of your children. Certainly Allah has given the task of the reformation of the

world to the Jama'at of the Promised Messiah^{as} and so we must pay heed to this great responsibility. Only then will we be able to protect our societies and to guide others towards the true teachings of Islam. Only then will we be able to save our children and future generations.

With the Grace of Allah the word's attention and focus is moving in the direction of our Jama'at. People are starting to recognise us and listen to our message. Each day Allah is opening new avenues of *Tabligh* and this is something some of you will have experienced yourselves. However, as these doors open, it becomes even more important that each Ahmadi seeks to bring about those pious changes that the Promised Messiah^{as} desired from his followers. Through such changes the doors of *Tabligh* will continue to open *InshaAllah*.



In this era Allah the Almighty has also enabled our Jama'at to benefit from modern forms of communication and the media. This is proving a great means of spreading the message of Islam far and wide. For example, through MTA the message of our Jama'at is reaching all corners of the world.

However, this also increases our responsibilities because those who are hearing our message will also look in our direction to see if we are practising what we preach. If they observe that the teachings we are conveying are pure, but the standards of the Ahmadiis themselves are weak, then instead of having a positive impact it may have the opposite effect. It is also possible that if others hear our message, but feel that old Ahmadiis are not living up to their required standards they will take it upon themselves to spread the true teachings of

Islam and live their lives accordingly. In that case the success and progress of our Jama'at, the Jama'at of the Promised Messiah^{as}, will be aligned to those pious newcomers and those left behind will be deprived of these blessings. Thus, do not let yourselves fall behind. Rather, seek to be at the forefront of conveying the truth of Ahmadiyyat, not only with your words, but with your conduct and deeds. Be the sources of light that illuminate the truth of Islam.

As I have said today we are able to utilise modern technology to convey our teachings. Apart from MTA we also have Jama'at websites in which programmes and books filled with knowledge and information are easily available. You must seek to avail these resources and constantly increase in your knowledge.

In terms of MTA, **every *Lajna* member should attach themselves to it and be regular in watching its programmes.** At the very least they should ensure they watch my Friday Sermons and the other programmes of Khalifatul Masih. And they should make sure their children also sit and listen. Those girls who have grown up here in the UK should also ensure they are closely attached to MTA and the Jama'at websites. They should make sure they watch the programmes of Khalifa-e-Waqt as this will be the means of their spiritual and moral development and will increase their religious knowledge.

In all parts of the world people are joining the fold of Ahmadiyyat, having recognised its truth by watching MTA. For example recently a man from an extremely tiny and remote island near France wrote that somehow he had come across



MTA and my sermon was being broadcast. In the sermon I spoke about the death of Jesus Christ^{as} and after listening to it the man said he was quite certain it was the correct teaching. He then went on the Internet to research the Jama'at and watched our programmes on YouTube; and after doing so he said he was sure of the truth of Ahmadiyyat. And so with the Grace of Allah he did *Bai'at*. There are also many Ahmadi women who join our Jama'at and are extremely strong in their faith. For example, when I was recently in Holland, I met an Ahmadi lady who had two children and who had come from France to meet me. She told me that after accepting Ahmadiyyat her husband had rejected her and removed her from her home. However, she remained firm and resolute in her faith in Ahmadiyyat. Naturally most women wish to live comfortable lives with their families and to live with comfort and ease. Yet still, **there are women who are ready to bear all forms of hardship and difficulty and persecution for the sake of their faith and belief in the Promised Messiah^{as}**. That is the state of a true believer; that he or she is willing to sacrifice all forms of comfort and to patiently bear all trials and tribulations for the sake of their faith.

Islam's true teachings:

The vast majority of you are those who were born Ahmadi and so you don't face such difficulties or problems. Thus, you should always be extremely thankful to Allah for the blessings He has bestowed upon you. And the way to be thankful is to increase your religious knowledge and to act upon Islam's true teachings and to inculcate them within your children. You will display true gratitude only when you are amongst those who

give priority to their faith over all worldly matters. In conclusion, I say again that you should seek to develop those righteous changes within yourself that the Promised Messiah^{as} desired of us. Whatever he taught was in accordance with the perfect teachings of the Holy Qur'an and the means of becoming closer to Allah. Remember Allah has said that he rewards those who are near to Him in ways that they can never imagine. If you give precedence to your faith then surely Allah will bestow upon you the blessings of both this world and the next. He will remove your difficulties and concerns and a true feeling of contentment will enter your heart. When a person reaches this state they no longer have worldly desires and all that remains in their heart is the love of Allah and their faith. When a person reaches such a standard it can be said that they have truly fulfilled the purpose of their creation. May all of you prove to be members of *Lajna Imaillah* not just in name, but in deed and conduct, and to be true servants of Allah.

May all of you always fulfil the expectations of the Promised Messiah^{as}. May you become torchbearers who shine a light on the true teachings of Islam and may Allah enable you to spread the true teachings of the Holy Prophet^{sa} of Islam and forever abide by the true teachings of the Holy Qur'an. May Allah bless *Lajna Imaillah* in all respects.

Create a religious atmosphere:

After this, I would also like to say a few words for those who speak Urdu. I have mentioned quite a few points in very simple words. These points are those which the Promised

Messiah^{as} has advised us upon on various occasions. *Lajna Imaillah* will also translate them and provide it to those who can read Urdu. Currently, many people are migrating here from Pakistan. I have said this on many occasions and continually remind those who have recently come here that the reason why you have come here is so that you can freely express your faith. And also, so that you can freely practise your faith. Thus, always remember that the reason for your migration was faith and therefore this places a responsibility upon you and you must fulfil this responsibility.

You have come here to acquire the freedom to express your faith, therefore instead of expressing your worldly freedoms, your conditions should in fact reflect the expression of faith as much as possible. It should not be the case that after coming here you forget your faith and become immersed in worldly pleasures and begin to give precedence to worldly freedoms over your faith. Your focus should not simply be on earning money or urging your husbands to earn more money to bring home, rather you should create a religious atmosphere in your home. You should try to provide your children with such a spiritual atmosphere whereby religion is always given precedence. You should try to instil this realisation in your children that faith is always to be given preference over worldly affairs. As I mentioned earlier that if women were to reform their household then future generations will also be reformed. Similarly, if women are righteous then majority of the men can also be reformed. Nonetheless, the future generation will certainly be reformed. The Jama'at and the Khalifah of the time will at least be assured that the future generations are being taken care of. It is your responsibility to

take care of the future generation, and this is a huge responsibility which you must pay attention to.

I gave the reference of *Kishti-e-Nuh* in which the Promised Messiah^{as} has advised women numerous times. This advice includes that you should not make unlawful demands from your husbands. It is true that some husbands do not take proper care [of their wives] but at the same time it is also true that there are wives who make unlawful demands from their husbands, even if they are only a few. Also, pay attention towards children. I also mentioned this in my address that attention should be paid towards their school education and it is important to educate them. However, you must give them the religious knowledge too. When you send them to school, focus on them. Do not think that they are now in school and are acquiring an education therefore our responsibility has finished. Complaints have started to emerge that previously when Ahmadi children were attending school they were the most disciplined and paid focus to their studies, however the mothers' are no longer paying any attention to them. Even when the parents are called in, they do not go and because of this children are being neglected. The children realise and feel that the other children's parents are coming in, while theirs do not. Therefore, those who have recently come, irrespective of whether you know the language or not, you must go to your children's school and find out how they are doing. If you do not know the language then take someone with you from the *Lajna* or any of your own friends, so that you know how your child is doing, and if the school has any complaint about the child or if any extra attention needs to be paid to the child then that can also be given. Therefore, this is very important,

otherwise children will fall into an inferiority complex and consequently they will neither be able to acquire school education and nor will they focus on their religious education. Therefore, the mothers which have newly come need to give a lot of attention to this.

Also, many young girls are coming; either for education or they have migrated or sought asylum. Some of them are young and unmarried; there are also some who are very young and have come with their parents. They should also remember that after coming here they have to give precedence to their faith over worldly matters. They should try to understand this and continue to emphasise that religion is our priority and worldly affairs are secondary. If not, then we have broken our pledge of *Bai'at*. Thus, it will be hypocritical if on the one hand we make the pledge of initiation and on the other hand we fail to adhere to it. Therefore, this is a very important responsibility. Do not think that after coming here you have acquired freedom. Indeed you have been granted freedom so that you may practise your faith. However, you have not been given freedom so that you can escape from religious obligations and follow worldly pursuits. Therefore, pay particular attention to this. May God Almighty enable you all to do this.

Let us now pray."

Address to
Waqfaat-e-Nau
at the National Ijtema
Waqfaat-e-Nau UK
delivered on
27th February 2016

After reciting Tashahhud and Ta'awwuz, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) said:

'A few years ago, attendance at Waqfaat Nau Ijtema used to be of younger girls, but now, with the grace of Allah, quite a number of Waqfaat e Nau have themselves become mothers, and as mothers, they have come to include their own children in the Waqf e Nau scheme. Thus, you will realise that the Waqf e Nau scheme, which started around 29 years ago, has now, with the grace of Allah, entered its second generation. The scheme has reached a stage wherein those who received moral training and guidance, in accordance with their status as members of Waqfaat e Nau, are now catering for the moral training of the next generation.

Responsibilities of Waqfaat e Nau

In light of this, you should recognise and understand that the responsibilities of the members of Waqfaat e Nau have increased much more than before. On the one hand, this is a means of happiness whereby we can see how Allah the Almighty is granting the Jama'at thousands of mothers who have pledged their lives for the sake of their faith. However, on the other hand, it is also a means of fear and concern because it is apparent that the responsibilities of such mothers have increased vastly.

Most certainly, if they do not train their children or the future generations in the right way, they will be answerable before Allah the Almighty. Indeed, Allah the Almighty has very clearly stated that all people who have been entrusted with anything

should fulfill the trust, and if they fail to honour their trusts, then they will be held accountable.

Addressing the believers in chapter 23, verse 9, Allah the Almighty says:

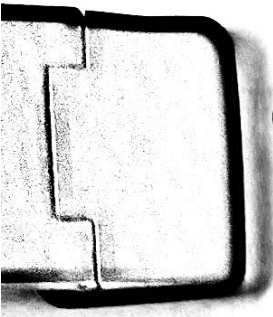
وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمْتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رِعُونَ

“And who are watchful of their trusts and their covenants,”

And so, as members of that fortunate group of people who, even amongst the believers, have pledged to fulfill their trusts and covenants above all others, you must realise the gravity and importance of your responsibilities. You are the people who have devoted your lives for the sake of your faith. You are the people who have pledged to forgo worldly pleasures for the sake of God Almighty.

It is particularly important for those girls who are now over the age of 15 to understand the significance and value of their responsibility. This is because they have willingly, in full maturity, renewed the pledge made by their parents prior to their birth. At their age, they should now have a full understanding of what is truly meant by Waqf, that is, devoting one's life and what it requires.

Those Waqfaat e Nau members who are now mothers will realise that over 20 years ago, their parents pledged their lives for the sake of their faith. Indeed, they pledged the lives of their unborn children, in accordance with chapter 3, verse 36 of the Holy Qur'an, where it says:



إِذْ قَالَتِ امْرَأَتُ عِمْرَانَ رَبِّ إِنِّي نَذَرْتُ لَكَ مَا فِي بَطْنِي مُحَرَّرًا
فَتَقَبَّلْ مِنِّي ۖ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

"Remember when the woman of 'Imran said, 'My Lord, I have vowed to Thee what is in my womb to be dedicated to Thy service. So do accept it of me; verily, Thou alone art All-Hearing, All-Knowing.'"

Now today, you who are the fulfillment of that covenant made by your mothers are yourselves reviving that pledge by stating that whatever is in your womb, you dedicate to the cause of God Almighty. As I have just said, you have reached an age where your thinking should be very mature, and you should understand your vast responsibilities. You should realise that being a member of the Waqfaat e Nau scheme is no ordinary thing.

Therefore, as you go about your daily lives, you should not look at which direction the world is moving in, and you should not have any complex about the country or culture you are living in. Nor should you be unduly influenced by the latest trends in fashion; rather, you must pay attention to what your responsibilities are. This should remain your focus and direction at all times.

Fulfillment of your pledge

You must understand both who you are and why you are. Hence, it is not merely enough to verbally proclaim that you are an Ahmadi; but rather, you must question why you are an

Ahmadi. It is not enough just to say that you have accepted the Promised Messiah (as), but instead you must ask why it is that you have accepted him. Similarly, it is not enough just to say that you intend to fulfil your pledge of Waqf; rather, you must consider how you will fulfil it and why you will fulfil it. These are questions that you must ponder over and reflect upon.

Surely, then, you will come to the realisation that as life devotees, you have one principal duty, and that is to serve and dedicate yourselves to the mission of the Promised Messiah^{as} who was sent in fulfillment of the promises of Allah the Almighty and the prophecies of the Holy Prophet^{sa}. And what was the mission of the Promised Messiah^{as}? It was to bring mankind closer to God Almighty and to establish the rights of one another.

It was to enlighten the world of the true teachings of Islam through his words, deeds, and conduct. It was to spread the true message of Islam to the corners of the globe. And so, as members of Waqfaat e Nau, it is your duty and obligation to inculcate these teachings and to spread them far and wide.

Relationship with Allah

Fundamental to fulfilling this objective is prayer and the worship of God Almighty. Only when you personally have a relationship with Allah, and only when you are fulfilling the rights of His worship, in terms of both the five obligatory prayers and voluntary Nawafil, will you be in the position to morally guide others and to show them the true teachings of Islam, and to bring them closer to their Creator.

Always remember that as an Ahmadi girl, and especially as a member of Waqfaat e Nau, your foremost priority must always be to seek the pleasure of God Almighty. The question is, how do you achieve this? As I said, the primary way is to fulfil the rights of the worship of God Almighty and, thereafter, to follow all of His commandments. Furthermore, it is essential that you continually increase your knowledge of Islam. Once you have learned about your faith, it is incumbent upon you to pass down such knowledge to your own children.

This is the means of fulfilling the great trust that has been placed in you. This is the means of fulfilling that solemn pledge that your parents made before your birth. However, it is not enough for you to only guide your own children or your family members; rather, as a Waqfaat e Nau, it is your responsibility, and indeed obligation, to spread these perfect teachings amongst the wider society so that others can benefit and so that the truth of Islam is established far and wide.

It is very clear that in today's world, the distance between mankind and God Almighty is increasing by the day. People are becoming less interested in religion, and an increasing number say they do not even believe in the existence of God. In fact, many people view religion as a joke or something that is to be mocked and ridiculed.

It is in such a challenging climate that **you must learn your faith and must be firm in your conviction of its truth.** You must build a personal connection with God so that you can

prove His existence to others and so you can demonstrate that He continues to listen to those who seek Him.

Only when you have a personal connection with Allah will you be able to convince others that He answers the prayers of those who have a relationship with Him and saves them from wrongdoing and evil.

Educate society about what is right and what is wrong

Furthermore, you must educate society about what is right and what is wrong. For example, it is your duty to explain to others that promoting immodesty in the name of so-called freedom is a means of lowering human values rather than raising them. It is a means of reducing self-respect rather than increasing it. You must prove that religious people are those who exhibit the very best moral standards. It is your duty to inform others that the pursuit of worldly pleasures is not the primary goal of one's life. Rather, the most important objective is to establish a relationship with their Creator. When a person establishes such a relationship with their Lord, then he or she will naturally be minded towards fulfilling the rights of other people and will manifest the very best morals and virtues at all times.

Thus, having a connection with God Almighty is the means of creating a beautiful, tolerant, and peaceful society. We are very fortunate because the Holy Qur'an has guided us about all aspects of our lives.

Adopt Virtues

On the one hand, it informs us of many virtues that we should adopt, whilst, on the other hand, it also highlights many vices and sins which we should avoid at all costs. For example, in the Qur'an, Allah the Almighty says that a believer must **take care of the poor** and should feed the hungry. Allah the Almighty says that a person should be willing to make **personal sacrifices** for the sake of others.

Avoid Vices

Allah the Almighty says that a person should avoid all forms of **arrogance and ill-thinking** of others. Allah the Almighty says that a person must always hold firm to the truth and **save himself from all forms of falsehood**. Allah says that a person should show gratitude to both Him and His creation. Allah the Almighty says that a person should manifest forgiveness and should exhibit patience and forbearance as much as possible. Similarly, Allah the Almighty has given many other commandments, and if we act upon them, we will purify and beautify our society in the very best manner.

Piety and morality

Certainly, it is the responsibility of Waqfaat e Nau members to decorate their homes with piety and morality. The way to do this is to be **regular in offering Salat [prayer]** and by **upholding all forms of virtue and righteousness**. If you are successful in this, then these qualities will automatically pass on to your children, and it will ensure that they remain firmly attached to Ahmadiyyat and to the worship of God Almighty.

If you achieve this, you will have proven successful in fulfilling that pledge that was first made by your parents and later renewed by you yourselves. Through your conduct, you will spread virtue and goodness throughout your environment and society. Keeping all of this in mind, always remember that it is a great responsibility on your part to forever give precedence to your faith over all worldly matters. If you become too involved in the latest fashion trends, you will naturally move away from religion.

Similarly, if you become consumed by worldly interests or pursuits, your faith will suffer and become of secondary importance to you. Thus, I repeat that you must each **understand your personal responsibility as a member of Waqfaat e Nau.**

As I said before, you must always keep in mind that you will be held to account for those pledges and covenants you have made. I think more than half of those attending today will be above the age of 15, so they have all reached the age of maturity.

Consequently, you should be aware that it is only through your good conduct and pious deeds that you can fulfil the pledge and the trust that has been placed in you. I am confident that you will not attend Ijtemas and Jalsas simply for the sake of attending, but rather, you will attend such events with the sincere intention of improving spiritually and seeking to incorporate whatever good things you learned into your daily lives. May Allah enable this to be the case.

Before moving on, I wish to say that within our Jama'at, there is a particularly strong need for Ahmadi women doctors and

teachers. Also, we require media graduates who can work in MTA or in any other way, and we also need Ahmadi journalists. Thus, those of you who have interests in these fields should try to pursue such avenues and paths.

Today, there are also younger Waqfaat e Nau girls aged between 12 and 15 present here sitting in front of me. This is an age of understanding and, to some extent, maturity. At this age, you should leave behind child-like behaviour and think seriously about how you can be good Ahmadis and positive role models. **You should think about your faith and your pledge, and you should not be adversely influenced by school friends towards worldly or immoral things.** Your goal and ambition should always be to please Allah the Almighty, and you should understand that it is your task to reform others. Instead of following the trends, our Ahmadi girls should set the trends of goodness and morality for others to follow.

Only if you start thinking in this way will you come to understand the importance of your role as members of Waqfaat e Nau or the Waqf e Nau scheme. Even at your young age, you should try to learn as much as you can about Islam. **Today, the only way to learn the true teachings of Islam is by studying the literature or books produced by the Promised Messiah (as) and the Khulafa.** Having been sent by Allah the Almighty, the Promised Messiah (as) has presented the true interpretation of the Holy Qur'an for us to follow.

Modesty and Purdah

Thus, the Lajna and elder Nasirat should regularly read the Promised Messiah's (as) books and seek to implement what they learn into their daily lives. There are also some very young girls seated before me, as I have said, who are under the age of 12. They should remember that every Ahmadi girl must protect their modesty, so even girls who have reached the age of eight, nine, or ten should adopt modesty in their dress.

Their mothers who have pledged their lives for the Waqf e Nau Scheme should inculcate within their daughters the importance of always maintaining modest and dignified standards of dress. Of course, the clothing worn by all Ahmadi girls should be modest and decent, but it is especially important for members of Waqfaat e Nau to be conscious of this.

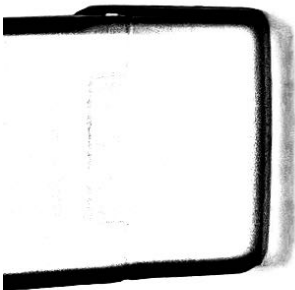
Only if they have this training from a young age will they feel no hesitation or complex in observing purdah [the veil] when they become older. Thus, as I said, even girls who are aged eight, nine or ten should dress in an appropriate and modest fashion. With the grace of Allah, even the young Ahmadi girls are very intelligent, and so they should all seek to learn about their faith and utilise intelligence in a good and positive fashion. For a young girl, this requires that she listens to the good things her parents teach her and tries to follow them.

As some mothers are also present here, I would like to remind them of their responsibilities as well. **Your children will only learn good things from you if you yourselves set a positive**

example for them. Thus, you should act righteously and beautify your homes with virtue and piety.

At the end, it is my prayer that all members of Waqfaat e Nau come to fulfil the expectations that their parents had of them when they pledged their lives for the sake of the Jama'at. I pray that they also fulfil the very high expectations that the Jama'at has of them or the Khalifa-e- Waqt [Khalifa of the Time] has of them. May the members of this blessed scheme come to fulfil the noble purpose for which their parents devoted their lives. May they forever live their lives according to the beautiful teachings of the Holy Prophet^{sa}.

May Allah the Almighty bless all the members of the Waqf e Nau scheme in all respects.'



**Address to
office bearers
at the National Refresher
Course Lajna Ima'illah UK,
delivered on
*4th December 2016***

After reciting *Tashahhud*, *Ta'awwuz* and *Surah al-Fatihah*, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} said:

'The Lajna Ima'illah office bearers' refresher forum is now reaching its conclusion, and I am confident that it will have proved extremely beneficial.

I expect that you will have discussed various administrative matters, as well as other issues that arise from time to time. Through your mutual discussion and interactive sessions, hopefully, you will have learned a great deal and gained new ideas and perspectives.

Furthermore, I am sure that the central office bearers will have raised certain issues that they have had to contend with and hopefully plans will have been made to resolve them in the best way, as has been mentioned in the report. Similarly, regional or local office bearers will have had an opportunity to voice their issues or concerns, and hopefully, they too will have been resolved. Additionally, you will have had the opportunity to share some of your positive experiences and successes for others to benefit and learn from.

Attaining the pleasure of Allah:

Nevertheless, you must always remember that Jama'at work can never prove blessed unless it is conducted solely for the sake of attaining the pleasure of Allah the Almighty and is based upon *taqwa*. In terms of our religious duties, nothing can be achieved without *taqwa*, and if office bearers fail to achieve anything, how then can they set an example for others to follow? How can they hope to influence others if they themselves are failing in their basic duties and tasks?

Therefore, always remember that you can only positively influence other people if you are yourself a role model and example for them to follow. **As office bearers, it falls upon you to hold aloft the light of *taqwa* to guide others through the dark.** And for you to illuminate the path of others in this way, it is necessary that your own conduct is exemplary and according to the teachings and principles of Islam.

Whether elected or appointed or indeed, if they have presented themselves for the service of the Jama'at, our office bearers must forever seek to live their lives according to the commandments of Allah the Almighty and the teachings of the Holy Prophet^{sa}.

As I have said already, *taqwa* should underpin every effort made by office bearers and so, naturally, the question arises, what is *taqwa*? What does it mean and what does it require?

The Promised Messiah^{as} has explained this by saying that ***taqwa* is to save oneself from all forms of wrongdoing.** It does not mean a person only abstains from huge evils or sins, rather it is to avoid even the most minor sins and transgressions.

Furthermore, in a couplet he wrote that any state of being in which a person is unable to benefit others is opposed to *taqwa*. He also said that all forms of self-projection are against *taqwa* and that righteousness requires complete humility and meekness of character.

Thus, the Promised Messiah^{as} repeatedly instructed his followers to free themselves from all forms of arrogance, self-promotion, and pride. Certainly, those Ahmadis who have

been entrusted with Jama'at responsibilities and whose duty it is to ensure the *tarbiyyat* and well-being of the members of the Jama'at can never be successful if they fall prey to arrogance or consider themselves to be superior in any way.

Office bearers come to set the best example:

Accordingly, **all office bearers must strive to adopt *taqwa* in every aspect and sphere of their lives.** For example, they must be role models in terms of the worship of Allah the Almighty. They must set the best example of morality and virtue within their homes for their own children to learn from. Indeed, office bearers should seek to ensure that their homes remain peaceful, virtuous and a haven of spiritual contentment. They should set an example of fulfilling the rights of their spouse and children.



In terms of dress code, every office bearer should set the highest standard of **maintaining their modesty and dignity at all times.** With regards to the injunction of *pardah*, every office bearer should be an example of observing this Qur'anic commandment. Remember, the importance of *purdah* was repeatedly emphasised by the Promised Messiah^{as} and I have also spoken about it on many occasions.

Every office bearer's morals and manners must be an example for others to follow. Every office bearer should also be an example **of maintaining decency, truth and dignity** at all times when conversing and speaking with others. Thus, all office bearers should understand that wasting time in entirely meaningless, unproductive and useless sittings is harmful and against the teaching of the Qur'an. Of course, on occasion,

you may gather together and engage in lighthearted talks or discussions and there is no harm in this, however, you must know that your limits are, and understand where to draw the line.

For example, in some gatherings, people have the habit of speaking ill of others, finding fault in them, speaking against the *Nizam-e-Jama'at* or complaining needlessly and without justification. This is entirely wrong, immoral, and against our teachings. The ramifications and consequences of speaking in this way are often very serious and far-reaching. Therefore, it is particularly important that office bearers remain free from such vices.

In a similar vein, *taqwa* requires that a person does not sit in a gathering where Allah the Almighty or His Messenger (sa) are insulted in any way. Indeed, believers should abstain from all gatherings where people are mocked or spoken ill of. For instance, it is completely wrong to remain present when people speak against one's brother or sister, even if they do not personally take an active part in this discussion. In the sight of Allah, merely to sit silently whilst such discussions are taking place is against the principle of *taqwa*.

The Promised Messiah^{as} said that those who remain present in such company have an illness in their hearts, because if their hearts were pure, they would never choose to remain. In fact, he went as far as saying that a person who listens silently to such immoral discussions is as guilty as a person who speaks. Just as those people who speak ill of others will be held to account by Allah, so will those who remain there and listen.

Responsibilities of office bearers

In terms of responsibilities, one question that often arises in the minds of Ahmadi women is how they should balance their Jama'at work with their family commitments. For this I will advise you to discuss this matter with your husbands and take their advice. Together you can mutually work out a schedule through which you can allocate a proper amount of time for your home and at the same time work out how much time you can dedicate to the Jama'at. In this way, you will be free from any anxiety or concerns that you are neglecting your home or Jama'at duties.



If you discuss it with your husbands as I have suggested, I hope and expect that they will also show understanding and be happy for you to devote a certain number of hours on weekends or, if needed, during the week for the Jama'at work. Indeed, if occasionally you are not at home when your husbands return from work due to your Jama'at work they should not make an issue of this. Further, you can arrange between yourselves so that at certain times, or on particular days your husbands assist you by looking after the children.

Nonetheless, this is not a license to ignore your responsibilities to your family. **Never forget that as mothers, your primary duty is to personally ensure the moral training of your children, and to raise them according to the teachings of Islam. Thus, as much as possible you should be at home when your children come back from school.**

It should not be that outside of your home you are involved in Lajna work and are amongst those who are considered an example for others, yet within the confines of your own four walls you are failing in your duties of doing the *tarbiyyat* of your own children.

Anyway, this **Jama'at work and home life balance** is something that needs to be handled carefully and wisely so that neither your family relationships are disturbed or negatively affected and nor is your Lajna work.

Returning to the importance of *taqwa*, the Promised Messiah^{as} once said that the very first test of a person's faith is *taqwa*. Of course, it is expected that office bearers will be those who are strong in faith and so if they fail in this most basic test, then what is left of their faith?

The reality is that *taqwa* automatically leads to a person's faith increasing and enables them to excel in goodness and virtue and to shun sinful activities. The Promised Messiah^{as} also said that bearing religious wisdom was an even higher standard of faith than righteousness, but that it was not possible to attain such religious wisdom without first attaining *taqwa*.

Certainly, in order to fulfil your duties, it is necessary for office bearers to display religious wisdom. But before you reach this higher standard you must first act in accordance with the demands of *taqwa*.

Further, the Promised Messiah^{as} said that knowledge is also a means of increasing *taqwa* and because righteousness is

linked to Allah Himself, it is necessary to attain knowledge of Allah the Almighty.

Where is such knowledge contained? Of course, the answer is in the Book of Allah, the Holy Qur'an.

Thus, **all office bearers must regularly recite the Holy Qur'an** and seek its knowledge and understanding. They should see what the Qur'an advocates and what it prohibits and only then will you be in a position to set an example for others to follow. Only then will your words have weight and influence on others. Instead of waiting only for me to take out references from the Holy Qur'an and to instruct you about its commandments, it would be far better if every office bearer, according to their intelligence and capabilities, studied the Qur'an and sought out its teachings and deeper meanings. If they pursued knowledge of the Qur'an in this way, they would be in a position to personally act upon its teachings and guide others.

This is the way for all of you to **become true helpers of Khilafat**, to understand your faith, to act upon it and to inspire others. This is a way for you to fulfil that pledge you have made of being ready to sacrifice everything for the sake of *Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyyat*. Of course, it is the duty of every Ahmadi to be ready for all possible sacrifices in the name of their faith and for the sake of Khilafat. However, this burden falls even heavier upon office bearers.

Therefore, it is incumbent upon all of you to serve the Jama'at to the best of your abilities, to seek religious knowledge and to be ready for whatever sacrifices are required along the way.

Furthermore, *taqwa* requires that you sincerely strive to fulfil the administrative duties you have been entrusted with. Thus, each Lajna secretary, wherever they have been appointed and whatever level of the *Nizam* they are, must understand the importance of their responsibilities. They should consider their position not just an office but more importantly as an obligation and religious duty.

For example, the National Sadr has many duties and responsibilities as do her Naib Sadrs or local Sadrs, as does the General Secretary, *Tabligh* Secretary, *Tarbiyyat* Secretary, *Maal* Secretary, and indeed every other secretary. If every office bearer at a national, regional and local level understands their responsibilities and serves the Jama'at with a **true spirit of devotion and dedication** then you will soon come to see with your own eyes a spiritual revolution develop, *Insha'Allah*.

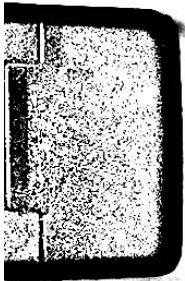
Hence, you should not consider yourselves as office bearers in name alone, rather you must seek to understand with fine precision the scope of your duties to the *Nizam-e-Jama'at* and to make every possible effort to achieve them. You cannot and should not expect that ordinary Lajna members will listen to everything you say simply because you are office bearers, and nor can you expect to assert your authority over them just because of your position. They will only value your opinion and listen to you when they see that you are a role model to them, and when they see that you yourselves are the paragons of virtue and humility and you call on them to be.

Further, they will only follow and listen to you if you yourselves are entirely obedient to the *Nizam-e-Jama'at* and

you yourselves prove to be a shining example of loyalty and obedience to the institution of *Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyyat*. Thus, you should reflect upon your own standards of obedience and truthfully evaluate if you have personally made every effort to act upon the words and constructions of the *Khalifa-e-Waqt*.

How can you expect Lajna members to follow you and implement all of your suggested programmes if you are failing to follow what your Khalifa has told you and failing to act upon his vision?

Therefore, it is imperative that you listen to my Friday Sermons each week because my **sermons are the means of learning what the *Khalifa-e-Waqt* desires** and what his vision for the Jama'at is. If you do not sit down with your own family to listen to the sermons of *Khalifa-e-Waqt*, then how can you direct others to do so?



In each week, there are 168 hours; in seven days, there are 168 hours, and if you are unable to set aside even just one hour to listen to the words of *Khalifa-e-Waqt*, it is a cause of extreme concern. The sermon of *Khalifa-e-Waqt* is the means through which the *tarbiyyat* of the Jama'at and office bearers is done. It is the means of bringing peace to the homes of Ahmadis. It is for these reasons that each year, Jama'at spends millions of pounds to fund MTA.

Bearing all of this in mind, if our office bearers do not take advantage of this great blessing of Allah, it can only be deemed as shameful and cause of the deepest regret. I have mentioned this because it has come to my attention that there are some office bearers who only read the online summary of

my sermon, whilst there are others who listen only on occasion.

In other countries where there is time difference of 10 or 11 hours, plus or minus, there are many sincere Ahmadis who listen to my Friday Sermons without fail and share whatever I have said with others. Yet, here in the UK, there are office bearers who do not listen to them even though there is no time difference. Thus, I say again, **that you should listen to my sermons and take notes from them and assess whether you are fulfilling the instruction and guidance of Khilafat.** See if you have fallen prey to those weaknesses and sins that *Khalifa-e-Waqt* warns against, and if so, strive to improve and free yourself from those shortcomings.

Similarly, reflect upon your good qualities, but rather than becoming proud or satisfied, seek to build on them with humility. Seek to follow whatever guidance *Khalifa-e-Waqt* gives and start by ensuring your own homes are a reflection of the true teachings of Islam. If your home life is virtuous and your family is acting upon the teachings of Islam, then naturally you and your family will have a positive influence on others.

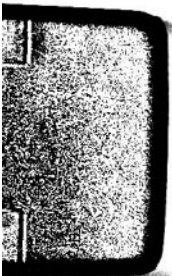
However, on the other hand, if your children are acting against the teachings of Islam; if they are dressing immodestly, if they do not have any religious knowledge, if they do not offer their prayers or if they fail to attend Jama'at events, then you cannot instruct others with any conviction. Even if you try to, your attempts will have no effect and will prove entirely futile.

As I said earlier, your first duty is to do the *tarbiyyat* of your children. Unquestionably, every Ahmadi parent has this

responsibility to their children, but our office bearers should be role models as parents as well and your conscience will guide you if you are fulfilling your responsibilities.

In this regard, sometimes I get complaints that if the attention of an office bearer is drawn to the *tarbiyyat* of their child either by Jama'at officials or by the auxiliaries, they become defensive and angry; this is wrong and not the manner of response expected of an Ahmadi office bearer. Our office bearers should look truthfully at the state of their own homes.

The reality is that if all office bearers come to set the best example, then more than seventy percent of Lajna members will become spiritually reformed and active members of the Jama'at.



Lajna constitution:

Moving forward, I also wish to say that **all office bearers should carefully read the Lajna constitution because it is filled with the directives and guidance given by Hazrat Musleh Maud^{ra} when he founded Lajna Ima'illah.** Whilst the constitution is for all Lajna members, it is particularly important for office bearers to read and understand it and, most importantly to act upon it, especially the first few pages where the instructions are given.

For example, in the constitution, Hazrat Musleh Maud^{ra} has stated that Lajna should join together to enhance the knowledge of one another. He said that at Lajna events or meetings, the topics that are discussed should be stimulating and thought-provoking so that people are naturally interested and drawn to them.

He also said that younger members of Lajna and new converts should be encouraged to give presentations on topics of their interest which can benefit others whilst at the same time increase their own knowledge and confidence.

Hazrat Musleh Maud^{ra} also said that Lajna meetings should be a platform for Lajna members to gather together to increase their spirituality and morality. And so, it should not be that only trivial things like food or clothing are discussed at your events. He said that women should help and assist one another in their efforts to become closer to Allah the Almighty.

Thus, you should hold regular religious discussions, seminars and talks that are conducted in a way that is interesting to people of all ages and backgrounds.

Furthermore, every office bearer should manifest the highest standards of love for Allah the Almighty, the Holy Prophet^{sa} and the Promised Messiah^{as} and they should always seek to increase their bond of love with Khilafat and be truly obedient to this blessed institution. Lajna office bearers must always strive to have the highest standards of patience, courage, and tolerance.

Moreover, in terms of your religion, you must not feel any type of embarrassment or hold any inferiority complex regarding any issue or Islamic teaching. Rather, you should be proud of your religion and openly practice and preach its teachings through your words and deeds.

Again, this is not exclusive to office bearers, but they certainly have a particular duty to set the best example in this regard.

These are all points that are of great importance for office bearers and you can revise them by reading your constitution. However, the key is that you do not just read and forget them, rather that you steadfastly act upon each and every point.

I have spoken in some detail about the importance of *taqwa* today, and as I said earlier, if all the office bearers heed my words, then the spiritual and moral reformation of at least seventy percent of Lajna will be done and thereafter, your efforts to motivate the other thirty percent will also bear fruit. If you excel in *taqwa*, then not only will your *Majlis* go from strength to strength, but you will also reap the rewards of such efforts within your homes wherein they will become filled with spirituality, contentment, and peace. This is the key to saving our future generations.



Remember that to attend a question and answers forum or to take part in an interactive programme is not enough, rather what follows is what truly matters. Only if you strive to act upon all that has been discussed and go away with the full intention of fulfilling your duties will such events prove worthwhile. Then, and only then, will you be in a position to safeguard not only yourselves, but also those for whom you are responsible and to whom you owe a duty of care. Most importantly, you will be protecting the future of the Jama'at by instilling true Islamic values amongst the coming generations.

May Allah grant all of you the ability to fulfil your responsibilities in the very best way. May Allah continue to shower His blessings upon Lajna Ima'illah. *Ameen*.

[Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} briefly addressed the Lajna in Urdu. The English translation is included below]

What I have said is that the responsibilities of office bearers is to be the foremost in taking on the teachings, and learning the teachings which Allah the Almighty has given to us in the Holy Qur'an. An office bearer should be a role model for the members of Lajna; in their home life, in raising their children, in the way that they dress, in the way that they speak and conduct themselves every day, in their *pardah*, and in their worship. It is only when they become role models in these matters that they will be able to have an impact on others.

Most importantly, in order to fulfil the responsibility that you have been entrusted, you will have to take care of your own homes. It cannot be that the *Tarbiyyat* Secretary goes out to do the *tarbiyyat* of others, yet that state of her children's *tarbiyyat* is in disarray. She goes out to others and speaks about their *tarbiyyat*, she comes to the mosque and does the *tarbiyyat* of others during programmes, yet she goes out to the market or shops and let alone *pardah*, she does not even cover her head with a scarf. If this is the state of office bearers, then it cannot be tolerated.

Another important matter, which I am summarising, is that complaints are received about some that they do not regularly listen to the sermons, or they simply read the summary on the internet, or they simply read the summary or key points that are circulated by Lajna or the Jama'at and then they think that this is equivalent to listening to the sermon. This is not correct. Everyone has their own personal perspectives, and it is possible that the Lajna office bearers who make the summary

do not include certain points that could be impactful for others. Everyone picks up on different things according to their own disposition.

Hence, it is important to listen to the actual sermon. In places like Canada where there is a six or eight hour time difference or Indonesia where there is about a ten hour time difference, or Australia where there is a time difference are able to listen to the sermons and can write to me afterwards, as many women do about the points they picked up on after listening to the sermon and if they didn't understand at first then they listen to it again, then how is it that here, where there is no time difference, you are unable to listen to the sermon?

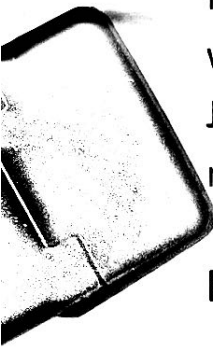
As I once mentioned in a sermon, if you develop a habit of listening to these sermons along with their children, you will be able to do *tarbiyyat* in their homes and it is then that they will be able to safeguard the next generation in terms of faith. Hence, you must pay special attention towards this. To become an office bearer is in itself of no value or achievement, rather alongside becoming an office bearer it is also important for you to understand your responsibilities.'

Address to
Waqfaat-e-Nau UK
at the National Ijtema
Waqfaat-e-Nau UK
delivered on
25th February 2017

The Equality of Women and Their Role in Society

After reciting Tashahhud, Ta'awwuz and Bismillah, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba}, Worldwide Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, said:

“Today, with the Grace of Allah, you are all attending the National Waqfaat-e-Nau Ijtema (event), which is arranged for those girls in our Jama'at (Ahmadiyya Muslim Community), whose parents pledged their lives for the sake of their faith before they were born, and who upon reaching the age of fifteen, have voluntarily renewed that pledge. Thus, you have willingly chosen to dedicate your lives for the service of the Jama'at and, given this, it is imperative that you continually reflect upon your moral standards and religious knowledge.



Education and Moral training:

You must ask yourselves if you are truly ready to serve wherever, and whenever the Jama'at calls you for service. *Masha'Allah*, having grown up here, you have all been blessed with many educational opportunities and so it can be said that you are all well-educated. Even those of you who are comparatively less educated than your peers, are still far more well-read than the majority of girls who grew up fifty or sixty years ago. And if we rewind the clock further, to the late 19th century or to the early 20th century, the girls and women of that period hardly had any educational opportunities at all.

similarly, in terms of both secular and religious knowledge, very few Muslim girls had the opportunity to pursue secular studies or to learn about their faith and to increase their religious knowledge. This is quite astounding and deeply regrettable, given that the Holy Prophet^{sa} placed great importance and value upon the education and moral training of women and girls. Yet, over time, this instruction of the Holy Prophet^{sa} was increasingly ignored amongst Muslims and so Muslim women became far less educated than men.

A major cause of this unfortunate trend was the fact that many so-called religious scholars from amongst the so-called *Ulema* (religious scholars) did not want religious knowledge to be shared or spread, either amongst men, but especially amongst women. In contravention of Islamic teachings, they desired for women to be confined solely within the four walls of their home and did not even permit them to gain a basic education. Such attitudes were extremely harmful to the long-term progress of Islam, because it was not possible for Muslim women to do the moral training of their children when they themselves had no knowledge of their faith. Yet this extremely selfish attitude prevailed across the ages and continued until Allah the Almighty sent the Promised Messiah^{as}, for the sake of the revival and rejuvenation of the true teachings of Islam.

Upon his advent, where the Promised Messiah^{as} emphasised the *Tarbiyyat* (spiritual and moral training) of men and encouraged them to be educated, similarly, he encouraged Ahmadi women and girls to seek both secular education and religious teachings. In fact, **there was a time when the**

Promised Messiah^{as} himself used to personally conduct religious classes for women. Through his blessed guidance, and subsequently through Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyya (caliphate in the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community), Ahmadi women came to understand the significance and value of gaining an education and of seeking religious knowledge. Certainly, throughout its existence, our Jama'at has continued to promote and support the education of women and girls and many programmes or schemes have been set up to facilitate this.

A prime example are the schools and colleges established by Hazrat Musleh-e-Maud^{ra} (Hazrat Mirza Bashir-Ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, the Second Worldwide Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community), first in Qadian and then in Rabwah. Through these centres of learning, those girls, who could not afford to travel to bigger cities to study, were provided a proper education and were able to attain high standards of secular knowledge and religious teachings. A huge added benefit of these schools and colleges was that our girls could attain education in a safe and moral environment, rather than having to travel to towns or cities where such an atmosphere did not exist. Having our girls educated in a safe and moral way is also a great challenge that we face today, especially here in Western countries, where the commonly held belief is that it is only due to the so-called 'freedoms' that they have afforded that they are progressing. However, in this belief they are wrong and there are many dangers and pitfalls that exist in these societies; and so all our girls, and particularly members of Waqfaat-e-Nau, must tread very carefully.

Never betray your Islamic values:

Whilst you should seek to excel in your studies, you must be careful that you never betray your Islamic values and never forsake the responsibilities placed upon you by your faith. As I have said, our Jama'at has always promoted the education of girls, and a by-product of this is that in some parts of the world, particularly in developing nations, but also in the Western world, we are seeing that Ahmadi girls take their studies more seriously than boys and are out-performing them. Whilst I am happy that our girls are shining in this manner, one issue that has arisen is that when it comes to deciding upon possible *rishtas* (proposals of marriage) some of our young Ahmadi women desire only to marry men who are educationally on par with them. Of course, our boys and young men should focus on their studies and work diligently, but if a girl gets a marriage proposal from a good and pious Ahmadi, she should not reject it just because the person is not as educationally qualified as she would like.

The priority in deciding upon a marriage proposal should always be righteousness and seeking to ensure that you can live the rest of your life in a home where the true values of Ahmadiyyat are always practised. Anyway, in terms of the importance of education itself, always remember that knowledge can only prove beneficial when used for the sake of upholding your religion and faith. And the primary way to utilise your knowledge for the sake of your faith is to fulfil the rights owed to Allah the Almighty and to fulfil the rights of one another. Foremost amongst the rights owed to one another, is the duty of a mother to raise and educate her children, be

they boys or girls, in a pious fashion, so that they grow to excel and prove to be great assets to their nations. However, nowhere does Islam say that women should be confined to the home as is sometimes alleged.

For example, there are some girls and ladies who excel in studies and achieve extraordinary results and Islam does not instruct that they should waste their talents or skills and only stay at home. Islam does not restrict them from fulfilling their potential, rather they can pursue those professions through which they can benefit humanity and serve mankind. Thus, women who have the capacity to become doctors or teachers or to pursue other professions which are of benefit to humanity can do so. However, at the same time, they should not ignore their duties to their children and to their families. Such women should manage their time effectively and ensure that their children are not neglected in any way. Certainly, the **first priority of an Ahmadi mother must always be the moral training of her own children.**

Consequently, members of Waqfaat-e-Nau, who, having acquired high level degrees or qualifications, desire to make use of their skills professionally must ensure that they also fulfil their responsibilities of their home. Equally, those girls who are well-educated, but who do not go out to work professionally, should never bear any form of inferiority complex or feel embarrassed or as though they are wasting their talents. **The truth is that looking after your homes, and caring for and raising your children, is of profound importance and of priceless value.**

Generally speaking, Islamic teachings have ascribed a division of labour between the sexes and it is a great favour of our religion that it has made our respective roles and responsibilities so clear. Nonetheless, Islam has catered for all possible circumstances and so, even apart from professionals, there may be special conditions where women need to work. For example, during the time of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, women worked as nurses to aid those who had been injured during the battles and wars that took place. Indeed, a few Muslim women even fought on the front lines and showed magnificent courage and bravery.

Anyway, as I mentioned before, you are the people whose parents pledged your lives for the service of Islam, and many of you have now reached adulthood or are fast approaching it, and have renewed that pledge for yourselves. The question is why did you renew the bond of *Waqaf* (life dedication)? Why have you pledged your lives to the Jama'at? You should reflect upon this, as you can only fulfil your pledge if you understand what it entails and requires. **By being a Waqf-e-Nau you have promised that you will forever give priority to your faith over all worldly and material things.**

Hence, alongside your secular education in your schools and colleges, it is of paramount importance that you also strive to gain religious knowledge, because until you know what your religion teaches and expects, you cannot live your life according to its teachings. First and foremost, it is essential that you all read the Holy Qur'an with translation and study its commentary as much as possible. Only by becoming familiar with the Holy Qur'an will you be able to clearly

understand the commandments of Allah the Almighty. Knowledge of the Qur'an will be the means of your spiritual progress and will enable you to do the *Tarbiyyat* [moral training] of your own children.

Progress lies in the hands of the mothers:

Seated in front of me are several Waqfaat-e-Nau who are now mothers themselves, but at the same time they are also working in various professions, and so I would again remind them that they must divide their time in a way that the moral training and well-being of their children never suffers. There are also many young girls present who are now engaged to be married, and so *Insha'Allah* (God Willing) their family lives will soon begin and they should enter the next stage of their life knowing that their first priority is to train their children. If you fulfil this primary duty, it will not only benefit you and your family, but your efforts will also prove to be a source of pride and benefit to your nation, because you will have instilled positive values into the next generation. You will be ensuring that your children grow to be role models, who will understand their duties to those who follow them. In this way, you will be the foundation for a cycle of perpetual humanity, morality and peace amongst the coming generations. By training your children according to Islamic teachings, you will not only be a means of protecting them, but also the generations that follow as well.

Remember that the key for any nation to thrive and progress lies in the hands of the mothers of that nation. In terms of the status of women in Islam, we need look no further than

the teachings of the Holy Prophet^{sa} during the period when Islam was being attacked and defensive wars were fought by the Muslims. At the time of that Jihad, many Muslim men were martyred and, as we all know, the rewards and blessings associated with martyrdom are vast. Consequently, some Muslim women asked the Holy Prophet^{sa} why they were not permitted to fight and why they were being deprived of the blessings of Jihad of the Sword and martyrdom, by looking after their homes. In reply, the Holy Prophet^{sa} told the women that if they fulfilled their duties to their home, and if they did the moral training of their children, and raised them to be pious Muslims, then their reward would be equal to the reward of the men who went and engaged in Jihad.

In this era of the Promised Messiah^{as}, the conditions for a physical Jihad of the Sword no longer exist, because no nation or group is raising a physical army against Islam and the tactics used by its opponents today are quite different. Rather than physical warfare, they are attacking Islam through the publication of anti-Islam literature, through the media and internet and through their own forms of missionary work. Accordingly, we are now in a period where education is the key to challenging this propaganda by waging an intellectual Jihad through those same mediums that are being used to target Islam. **It is not only men and boys who can take part in this Jihad of the Pen, rather our women and girls can, and must, take part.**

Defend Islam from the false charges:

Amongst our ladies, the members of Waqfaat-e-Nau should lead this effort and so, once you have attained a good education, you must not waste any opportunity to defend Islam from the false charges that are being levelled against it. This is another reason why it is necessary that you gain religious knowledge so that you can respond to the different allegations made and remove any misconceptions that exist. Without any fear, embarrassment or complex, you should respond boldly to the false claims that are made because you have truth on your side. In this era, many of the allegations raised against Islam centre around women's rights and so you should particularly focus on responding to them. For example, it is often alleged that Islam oppresses women and forces them to remain confined within their home at all times. Similarly, it is said that the hijab is a means of subjugating women.

Another common allegation is that women are denied their basic rights by Islam, even though Islam is that religion, which from the outset guaranteed the rights of all women. It is that religion which liberated women and established their true status and honour. It is only in the past century, that those people and nations who condemn Islam, have been forced to afford some basic rights to women and yet they still try to claim moral superiority. Furthermore, in the name of 'freedom' they have fostered an environment in which women are treated as objects and their dignity and true status is constantly undermined. Anyway, as I said, it is your duty to

defend the noble teachings of Islam through the media and other similar means.

Thus, a central team of Waqfaat-e-Nau should be established for this purpose and similarly there should be local teams in different regions and cities as well. It is you, our Waqf-e-Nau girls and ladies, who must take on the mantle of educating the world about the meaning of true dignity and explain how the rights of women have been protected by Islam. For this, you must, as **I have already said, read and study the Holy Qur'an and also read other Jama'at literature as much as possible.** The knowledge you will gain from such study will provide you with the intellectual power and capability to overcome the arguments of those who oppose our religion.

In terms of the importance of seeking knowledge, Hazrat Musleh-e-Maud^{ra} once remarked that until 100% of our Ahmadi women were fully educated, it would be impossible to train the youth of our Jama'at. This comment was steeped in truth and wisdom. If 10%, 20% or even 50% or 60% of our women are well educated and knowledgeable and raise their children in the best fashion, it will still not be enough. The reason is that their children will meet other Ahmadi children, whose mothers are not educated or do not have sufficient religious knowledge, and such children will have a negative effect on them. Therefore, for a true righteous and spiritual community to develop, we need every single Ahmadi mother and father to play their respective roles.

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families set a positive example for their own children it will ensure that we can create a spiritual and Islamic atmosphere, even whilst living here in the West. Through your schools and colleges, you all have easy access to secular education, but as I have said repeatedly, you must pursue religious knowledge alongside it. **Otherwise, if you abandon your religious teachings and traditions, the worldly knowledge you attain will not be of any real value or benefit to you.** Again, I urge you to study the Holy Qur'an as much as possible and read the books of the Promised Messiah^{as} and whatever other Jama'at literature is available in English.

Code of conduct:

Furthermore, you should listen to my sermons and try to act upon whatever I ask of you. Indeed, you should consider the sermons of the *Khalifah-e-Waqt* (Khalifah of the time) as a ready-made code of conduct for you to live your lives by. As I said, it is your duty to respond to the allegations made against Islam in the West, particularly those that relate to women's rights. You must respond, not only through your words, but also through your conduct. For example, you should maintain a good standard of purdah at all times. Just a few months ago, in Canada, I delivered a sermon in which I listed around 34 or 35 special traits that members of the Waqf-e-Nau should strive to attain. I highlighted those qualities that ought to be the hallmarks of Waqf-e-Nau and so you should keep them in mind at all times and assess to what extent you are practising them.

You must also be regular in Namaz (*Salat*) i.e. the formal prayer in Islam and always pray that Allah blesses your efforts and enables you to utilise your education and knowledge with wisdom. On one occasion, Hazrat Musleh-e-Maud^{ra} narrated an incident of an Ahmadi girl who had completed her Bachelor's degree, and so she was advised that having attained high qualifications, she should try to spread the teachings of Ahmadiyyat amongst other educated people through *Tabligh* [preaching]. However, in response, she remarked that she did not attain such qualifications and education in order to cause 'division' and that she felt doing *Tabligh* was a means of sparking conflict. Having narrated this, Hazrat Musleh-e-Maud^{ra} remarked that her response was not of an educated or literate person, but was the response of someone who was ignorant and illiterate. Thus, none of you should fall into this trap. You should understand and recognise the opportunities Allah has blessed you with and seek to use whatever knowledge you have gained for the sake of the defence and propagation of Islam.

Spiritual standards of the Muslim women:

At this time, I also wish to clarify another allegation that is often levelled against Islam by its opponents, and regrettably, is even believed by some Muslim men and women. The allegation refers to the Hadith in which the Holy Prophet^{sa} said that he had seen in a vision of hell in which there were many women, who had no knowledge of their religion, who displayed no wisdom or intellect, and who were ungrateful. Based on this Hadith, certain non-Muslim critics have alleged that Islam has belittled and maligned the status of women,

yet nothing could be further from the truth. Hazrat Musleh-e-Maud^{ra} has given a detailed commentary and interpretation of this Hadith, in which he notes that the Holy Prophet^{sa} was referring to specific weaknesses that existed in some women of that time, whereby they were illiterate, ignorant of their faith and ungrateful for the favours bestowed upon them.

Hence, the words of the Holy Prophet^{sa} were given as a warning for such women to reform themselves. Yet, during the same era, we also see how Muslim women scaled the highest peaks of morality, virtue and knowledge. For example, some women, notably Hazrat Ayesha^{ra}, taught Islam to the Muslim men. Similarly, some fought in battles alongside the men and gave great sacrifices. Further, as I mentioned earlier, the Holy Prophet^{sa} said that women who trained their children and looked after their homes would be the recipients of the same rewards as those who had engaged in Jihad. Thus, how could it be that such devout and pious women were bound for hell? It is impossible and anyone who claims this has entirely misrepresented the teachings of the Holy Prophet^{sa}.

As I said, this Hadith was a warning and note of caution to the women of that time. It was also a means of inspiration, as the Holy Prophet^{sa} sought to raise the spiritual standards of the Muslim women, and showed them the means of unlocking the doors to paradise. Never did the Holy Prophet^{sa} say that these weaknesses or sins were part of the nature of women, rather he counselled that they were bad habits that had developed amongst some. Whilst nature is something

inherent and permanent, bad habits can be changed and improved upon.

Just as the Holy Prophet^{sa} repeatedly drew the attention of Muslim men to their weaknesses and taught them how to reform, similarly he guided the women as well. It is a cause of deep sorrow that this Hadith has regularly been misinterpreted and abused by certain so-called Islamic scholars, who have hatefully claimed that these words prove that women are wrongdoers, lacking in wisdom, knowledge or judgment and who are, God forbid, bound for hell no matter what. Nothing could be further from the truth. As I said earlier, many of the so-called *Ulema* (religious scholars) did not wish for women to progress and so they purposely interpreted this Hadith in a completely wrong fashion in order to fulfil their own selfish agendas. These words of the Holy Prophet^{sa} were spoken only as a means of reformation, so that women could fulfil their potential and raise their status.

We, Ahmadi Muslims, are truly fortunate that the Promised Messiah^{as} has enlightened us to the ignorance of the other *Ulema* and saved us from their fabrications and foolish interpretations. Thus, it will be a grave and perilous mistake for any woman to believe, having heard the false interpretations of the so-called scholars, that she lacks the capability to harbour knowledge, that she is inherently ungrateful, or that there is no point in learning her faith, as she is destined for hell no matter what. It is when a person gives up and believes that there is no chance of reformation or improvement that weaknesses and sins increase.

Tragically, some Muslim women have come under the influence of certain non-Ahmadi *Maulvis* (religious clerics) and so have become prone to the belief that they are somewhat inferior to men. This is completely wrong and erroneous. No woman should ever accept the false notion that somehow, they are bound for hell, inferior to men or unable to gain knowledge or wisdom. **Let it be crystal clear that in no respect is a woman's status less than that of a man.** Rather, the Holy Prophet^{sa} was the person who established the rights of all women, in all places and for all times. How could it ever be that, on the one hand, the Holy Prophet^{sa} proclaimed that paradise lay under the feet of one's mother, and that half of Islamic faith could be learned from Ayesha^{ra}, and yet on the other hand, state that, God forbid, women were hell-bound? As I said, this is impossible, and such claims are the result of the ignorant and false interpretations given by some clerics, solely to satisfy their own interests.

This Hadith was actually a great favour upon all womankind by the Holy Prophet^{sa}, as he warned them and showed them the path to salvation and brandished a spiritual torch guiding them towards the path of Allah. Thus, no Muslim woman should ever have any complex whatsoever about their status and nor should they ever accept any false interpretation of this Hadith. The correct interpretation is that women should, just like men, try to remove their weaknesses, and should pursue secular and religious education and use their knowledge to defend Islam and for the sake of the moral training of their future generations. The younger girls present should also understand the importance of education and

should try to excel in their schools and colleges, whilst also striving for religious knowledge.

Even at your young age, you should keep in mind that your education is the means through which you will, *Insha'Allah* (God Willing), come to serve Islam. Never bear any complex about your faith, whether in regard of Islamic teachings or in terms of the observance of your faith. For example, you should always wear modest clothing, and confidently explain to others that you are not forced to wear such clothes, rather you choose to dress modestly having understood the deep wisdom underpinning your faith. Similarly, from a young age, Waqfaat-e-Nau girls must be regular in *Namaz* (Salat). **Remember, that the five daily prayers are obligatory from the age of 10 and so try to offer your prayers with proper concentration and with the aim of increasing your connection with Allah.**

May Allah enable all of you to understand and act upon what I have said today. May Allah Help all of you to fulfil the demands of your pledge as members of the Waqfaat-e-Nau scheme – Ameen.

Now, join me in silent prayer.”

Address to
Lajna Ima'illah
at the National Ijtema
Lajna Ima'illah UK
delivered on
24th September 2017

After reciting Tashhahud, Ta'awwuz, and Surah Al-Fatihah, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} said:

High status of women:

'As a result of understanding Islam's true teachings, the members of the Jama'at [the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community], with the Grace of Allah, appreciate the very high status of women according to Islam, and it is a status that most non-Ahmadi Muslims, and the wider non-Muslim population, are not aware of and do not comprehend. Today, your Ijtema [annual conference where members gather from all across the country], which is purely for Ahmadi women and girls, is concluding and during the event, many activities and events have taken place in order to increase the religious knowledge, morality and spirituality of the participants. Furthermore, from an administrative perspective, this Ijtema has been organised and run by women from start to end, and they will have made a programme that is attuned to the needs and preferences of our ladies and girls. Hence, this Ijtema is a collective and practical demonstration of the great status bestowed upon women by Islam.

One allegation often levelled against our religion is that it discriminates against women or considers them to be less than men. However, this is in complete contrast to Islam's true teachings. In chapter 4, verse 2 of the Holy Qur'an, the creation of the human race is mentioned and it states that Allah created humankind from a "single soul". Immediately after this, the Holy Qur'an states: [Arabic: Khalaqa minha Zaujaha] which means "created therefrom its mate". In the

Bible, where the creation of man and woman is discussed, the concept of a "mate" is also mentioned, however it goes on to say that a woman was created from the rib of Adam^{as}. This is contrary to the teachings of the Holy Qur'an, which clarifies that women were not created out of the body of a man or from his rib. Rather, the Qur'an testifies to the fact that men and women were created from a single soul and are of the same kind and species. Thus, where the Qur'an says "created therefrom its mate" it signifies that Allah Ta'alah [God the Exalted] has made men and women in the same way and it cannot be said that one is dominant over the other.

Furthermore, when Allah the Almighty has said

خَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا that **He has created a woman in the same**

way that he created man, it becomes clear that Allah has made the hearts and minds of women in the same way that He has created the hearts and minds of men. There is no mention of a woman being created from a man's rib, rather similarities and likeness are mentioned. Despite this, throughout history, there have been occasions where men have sought to prevent women from fulfilling their potential and responsibilities, whilst at other times, women have sought to stop men from fulfilling their duties and responsibilities. Whether due to a superiority complex or an inferiority complex, at times, men have considered themselves to be intrinsically different to women or women have considered themselves inherently different to men. However, the Holy Qur'an has categorically refuted this concept by saying that men and women are of the same kind.

It has clarified that men and women have the same feelings and emotions, similarly as each man will be accountable before Allah for his deeds, so will each woman also be held accountable for her acts before God.

Nevertheless, it is true that Islam has given differing responsibilities and prescribed a division of labour between the sexes. Both men and women have been given differing roles, however, this should not be misunderstood to mean that women are incapable of understanding the responsibilities placed upon men. This idea of differing responsibilities is entirely normal and according to nature. Even amongst men, there are differences that exist, whereby people have differing skillsets and abilities. For instance, some men are trained as doctors, others become engineers, teachers, scientists or a range of other professions and jobs. Yet, no matter how skilled a doctor is, he is not superior to the other professions and in other fields as well.

Different roles to men and women:

In the same way, to maintain a sense of balance within the world, Allah the Almighty, out of His infinite wisdom, has given different roles to men and women and they will both be held accountable before Allah with regards to the fulfilment of their respective responsibilities. Indeed, the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} said that just as it is the duty of a shepherd to protect his sheep, similarly it is the duty of every man and woman to fulfil their prescribed duties. Thus, if Allah Ta'alah has placed upon a woman the responsibility to ensure the moral and religious training of her children and to ensure that

she protects the home and property of her husband, she must pay heed, because she alone will be held accountable for these matters. In the same way, if a man has been tasked with providing financially for his family, to care for them and fulfil their needs, he will be held accountable for this.

The fact that Islam has allocated different duties to men and women does not mean that women do not have the ability to do the work of men or are inferior in any way. As I said at the beginning, this Ijtema is being organised by Lajna [members of Lajna Ima'illah, an auxiliary organisation of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community comprising women over the age of 15] members and is a great example of the excellent capabilities and organisational skills of our Ahmadi women. In fact, this Ijtema is actually a product and manifestation of the continued work and progress of Lajna Ima'illah. Thus, any man who thinks that women should not take an active part in religious affairs, or make sacrifices for their faith, and should stay away from religion and just remain a "decoration" for their husbands to enjoy, is guilty of extreme ignorance. Similarly, if any woman thinks that due to her domestic responsibilities she does not need to partake in religious matters, or make sacrifices for her faith and nation, she too is mistaken and is guilty of undermining the status of women.

It was for the very sake of making our Ahmadi women understand their responsibilities, and to remove any doubt about the need for women to be involved in religious matters and other activities, that Hazrat Musleh Mau'ud^{ra} [Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-din Mahmud Ahmad, the second successor and worldwide head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community

from 1914-1965] established Lajna Imaillah so that every Ahmadi lady could become an active member of the Jama'at. Very beautifully, Hazrat Musleh Mau'ud^{ra} said that for a man the best name is "Abdullah", and in the same way the best name for a woman is "Amtullah" – because any man should desire, above all, to be a man of God and His servant, whilst any woman should desire to be a woman of God and His servant. Indeed, in the Holy Qur'an, of all the qualities of the Holy Prophet^{sa} one mentioned by Allah the Almighty is of his being "Abdullah" – a true man of God and His servant. Therefore, to be a sincere servant of Allah, should be the greatest desire for any Muslim lady and this is the reason your auxiliary organisation has been named Lajna Imaillah.

Accordingly, **every Ahmadi woman should sincerely strive to be a servant of God so that they may become an heir to His rewards, rather than inheritors of His Wrath and Anger.** In worldly terms, a person who has fulfilled his duties in the best way is presented before the monarch in order to receive an honour or reward, whilst a criminal is presented before the authorities for sanction and punishment. Whilst covetous glances are cast in the direction of the person who receives honours, criminals are looked upon with disgust and pity. Thus, every lady should seek to ensure that she understands her duties and strives to be amongst those who attain the rewards of Allah the Almighty.

The great sacrifices made by women:

In terms of your duties to the Jama'at and faith, you should remember that in the eyes of Allah, the responsibilities and

duties placed upon men and women are the same and both must be ready to fulfil their pledges and make sacrifices for the sake of Islam. Speaking about the great sacrifices made by women in bygone eras, Hazrat Musleh Mau'ud^{ra} gave the example of the time of the Prophet Jesus^{as}. He said that amongst the most sincere and loyal disciples of Jesus^{as} were women, who would tirelessly spend their days and nights spreading his message and their sacrifices have been recorded in Christian history as a source of pride.

Indeed, when Jesus^{as} was taken down from the cross and emerged from the coffin in which he was subsequently placed, it was women who were the first to greet and help him. Whilst his male disciples had run away in fear of the rulers, it is recorded that Mary Magdalene and two other women disregarded any fears for their own safety and reached Jesus^{as} in the very early hours of the morning. In this way, they displayed immense bravery and exhibited a firm faith that exceeded the standards of the men.

This was the example of the time of Jesus^{as} but of all the prophets, without doubt, it is the life of the Holy Prophet^{sa} that has been documented and preserved in greatest detail and unquestionably during his blessed era the sacrifices made by the Muslim women reached a pinnacle and were of standards that have never been witnessed at any other juncture of history. Indeed, when you read about the sacrifices made for the sake of their faith, you can only be overcome with emotion. During that early period of Islam, the Holy Prophet^{sa} and his followers were subjected to ferocious levels of persecution and unspeakable cruelties were inflicted

upon them. Whilst all the early Muslims had to face persecution, nonetheless, the treatment of Muslim slaves was even more inhumane and brutal.

For example, amongst the companions, were a husband and wife, both of whom were slaves of a non-Muslim and their owner inflicted such merciless and terrifying cruelties upon them that merely reading about their treatment leaves a person shaken to the core. They would be forced to lie on scorching hot sands and beaten relentlessly on their chests and bodies. They would be left to burn to the point that their eyes would become completely red and swollen beyond all limits, yet their master showed no remorse or mercy. On one occasion, upon seeing how they were being tortured and made to lie upon the burning sands, the Holy Prophet^{sa} became overwhelmed with emotion. He was grief-stricken like a father witnessing his children being beaten before his very eyes. He observed how the slave-master sought to compel them to reject the Holy Prophet^{sa} and to accept his belief that there were many other gods apart from Allah the Almighty. Overcome with sorrow, the Holy Prophet^{sa} turned towards Allah and remained engaged in prayer for some time. Thereafter, with great emotion, the Holy Prophet^{sa} addressed the Muslim husband and wife and said: *"Be patient! Be patient! Surely, Allah will remove you from these pains very soon and in return, He has made a home for you in Paradise."*

As a result of the continued torture, it was not long before the husband breathed his last. Thereafter, the owner brutally attacked the Muslim lady by piercing her stomach with a spear and so she also joined the ranks of the martyrs. These

slaves were not of any worldly rank or status, yet due to their acceptance of the Holy Prophet^{sa} and their impeccable standards of faith they scaled the highest spiritual mountains and have been recorded in history forevermore. They were the people who gave every possible sacrifice and bore every form of torture for the sake of their belief in the One God. The persecution of the Muslims in Makkah continued unabated and finally, when it went beyond all limits, as the enemies of Islam continued to increase their evil plots, the Holy Prophet^{sa} instructed his companions to migrate to Ethiopia.

Upon this, the companions protested and asked how could it be that they migrate to live in peace, whilst their beloved spiritual master, the Holy Prophet^{sa}, remained in danger and continued to face the most horrific cruelties. In response, the Holy Prophet^{sa} said that Allah had not yet commanded him to migrate and if that day came he would as well, but for the time being his followers should go without him. Amongst those who decided to migrate was a Muslim lady, who in the early hours of one morning, collected her belongings and placed them on a camel ready to depart. By chance, Hazrat Umar^{ra}, who had not yet accepted Islam, walked by and after observing this lady being forced out of her hometown in the early hours, he felt a sense of sorrow and guilt. Addressing the lady with his voice trembling with emotion, Hazrat Umar^{ra} said, *"it seems you are getting ready for a journey?"*

In response, the Muslim lady said: *"We can no longer tolerate the cruelties and pain inflicted upon us and so we have been left with no choice but to leave. In the end, what did we do to you that meant you treated us so inhumanely and punished us*

with such cruelty? All we say is that Allah is One but you cannot tolerate it and so now we have to leave."

This desperate and emotional response of the Muslim lady caused Hazrat Umar^{ra}, who was still a formidable opponent of Islam and a person who had shown no mercy in his opposition to Muslims, to be overcome with emotion. As tears rolled down his cheeks, he could only bring himself to meekly say, *goodbye and all the best* before turning away.

Similarly, there is a famous incident pertaining to the sister of Hazrat Umar^{ra}. On one occasion, when he remained a raging opponent of Islam, Hazrat Umar^{ra} set out with a sword in his hand, with the intention of killing the Holy Prophet^{sa} and bringing an end to Islam once and for all. On the way, a man asked him where he was going, and when he told him his purpose, the man said that he should first enquire after his own family, as one of his sisters had accepted Islam. Thus, Hazrat Umar^{ra} went straight to the home of his sister and knocked forcefully at the door. His sister and her husband were reciting the Qur'an and upon realising that Hazrat Umar^{ra} had come, they hid their Muslim teacher, as well as the pages of the Qur'an. However, Hazrat Umar^{ra} had heard them, and so upon entering, he immediately asked what they had been reciting. His sister replied: *"We were reciting the Holy Qur'an."*

Hazrat Umar^{ra} said that he heard that she and her husband had become "*Saabi*" meaning that they had accepted a belief that was not accepted by the people of Makkah. In a fit of rage, Hazrat Umar^{ra} lunged forward in an attempt to strike his

brother-in-law, but with great defiance and courage, his sister stepped forward to shield her husband and said, *"Yes, we are Muslims and if you want to kill us then go ahead!"* Hazrat Umar^{ra} was unable to withdraw his hand in time and so he struck his sister accidentally or unintentionally in the face with such heavy force that she was wounded and blood gushed forth from her nose. Upon witnessing how his sister had sacrificed herself to protect her husband, Hazrat Umar^{ra} was left astonished.

Despite his hatred for Islam, Hazrat Umar^{ra} was good at heart, and so after seeing the blood on his sister's face, he felt shame and regret, for he knew that rather than protect his sister, as was his duty, he had been a means of grievously injuring her. Feeling restless and wracked with guilt, his aggressive tone suddenly changed, and he timidly asked his sister if she would bring the pages of the Qur'an for him to read. Upon this, the supreme faith of his sister roared into action, and having already been beaten by her brother, she no longer remained a defenceless woman but was transformed into a courageous lioness.

Without any fear, she declared, *"you cannot touch the Qur'an as you are not pure or clean. I cannot place the Qur'an anywhere near you whilst you are in this state."* Having realised what he had done, Hazrat Umar^{ra} felt ashamed, and so softly asked his sister how he could purify himself so that she would permit him to read the Qur'an. In reply, his sister said that he must first go and bathe and clean himself and only then would she permit him to touch the Holy Qur'an. As instructed, Hazrat Umar^{ra} went and bathed before returning

and then his sister placed the Qur'an before him. After reading just a few verses, Hazrat Umar's^{ra} heart melted at the beauty of what he was reading and tears flowed from his eyes. Instantly, he felt abhorrence and shame for his past disbelief of Islam. Instantly, he viewed his past life with nothing but disdain and disgust.

Thereupon, he stood up in an emotional state and asked where the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} lived. Hearing this, his sister felt a surge of love for her brother and prayed sincerely that he would accept Islam, but at the same time she knew that she could never forgive herself if her brother was the cause of any harm to the Holy Prophet^{sa}. Thus, she grabbed hold of the collar of Hazrat Umar^{ra} and with great emotion, that only could be stirred by true faith and love for the Holy Prophet^{sa} she said, *"first, swear that you will not approach Muhammad^{sa} with any ill intention."* With true humility, Hazrat Umar^{ra} replied, *my only intention is to become a Muslim.* Upon this, his sister rejoiced and informed her brother where the Holy Prophet^{sa} was. Hazrat Umar^{ra} duly approached the Holy Prophet^{sa} and accepted Islam in a state of total submission. Hence, this was the great sacrifice made by a woman, who melted the heart of her brother, and as a result, the Muslims celebrated and raised slogans in praise of Allah, *"Allaho Akbar"* [God is Great].

Another astonishing example of faith pertains to the Battle of Uhud. During that war, the blessed teeth of the Holy Prophet^{sa} were broken and word spread that he had been martyred. When this news reached Madinah, Muslim women came out of their homes and ran towards the battlefield to find out the

truth about their master. On the way, an elderly Muslim woman frantically asked a companion if the Holy Prophet^{sa} was alive. In response, the companion said, *"I regret to tell you that your husband has been killed in the battle.* Upon this the lady said, *I am not asking about my husband, I am asking about the Holy Prophet^{sa}.* The companion then said, *I regret to tell you that your brother has also been killed.* Hearing this, the lady said, *I am not asking about my brother, I ask only about the Holy Prophet^{sa}.*" The companion then said, *"I am sorry but your son has also been killed.* Upon this, the lady desperately remarked, *I do not ask about my son, I am asking if the Holy Prophet^{sa} is alive."*

Finally, the companion informed [her] that the rumors regarding the Holy Prophet^{sa} had been false and he was alive. In a state of utter relief, the lady said, *"I do not feel any loss or pain or grief over whoever in my family has died because my beloved master, the Holy Prophet^{sa} remains alive."* This was the pure love and devotion professed by the Muslim women of that time towards the Holy Prophet^{sa}. These were the women who were ready for every sacrifice for the sake of Islam and their names have been recorded in history as examples for the rest of time.

Recently, I was told about an Ahmadi lady living in one of the western countries, who said that when she comes to Lajna meetings and takes the pledge, she repeats the words that, *"for the sake of her faith and nation she will be ready to sacrifice her life, wealth and time."* However, when it comes to the part about being ready to sacrifice her "children" she remains silent because her children are the one thing she can

never sacrifice. This is an example of a weakness in faith, and ultimately, such a person will become weaker in faith and, in reality, will neither be able to sacrifice their own lives, wealth or time for the sake of Islam. Remember, when we pledge in our *Bai'at* [pledge to join the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and live by its tenets] to give precedence to our religion and faith over all worldly matters it means that our love for Allah, for the Holy Prophet of Islam^{sa} and for our religion should be greater than for anything or anyone else.

Fulfilling the conditions of our *Bai'at*:

Further, in this era, the Promised Messiah^{as} said that, after developing a true love for Allah and for the Holy Prophet^{sa}, his followers must also form a bond of love with him. Thus, if we wish to remain part of the Jama'at of the Promised Messiah^{as}, we must manifest our love for him by fulfilling the conditions of our *Bai'at* and remaining obedient to his teachings. The Promised Messiah^{as} said, *"in my Jama'at, I wish to see a spiritual transformation which distinguishes Ahmadis from all others. If we are just the same as other Muslims then what is the benefit of doing Bai'at? If we are weak and lazy in our prayers like other Muslims then what is the benefit? If we are weak and lazy in reading the Qur'an and do not follow its teachings then what is the benefit?"*

Thus, if according to the teachings of the Holy Qur'an, you are not modest in your clothing and do not uphold the requirements of purdah what is the benefit of your *Bai'at*? If you do not fulfil your responsibilities within your homes, what is the benefit of your *Bai'at*? And if you do not practically

manifest the teachings of Islam and do not seek to spread it, what is the benefit of being an Ahmadi? Thus, every Ahmadi lady should deeply reflect upon their pledge to give precedence to their faith over all material desires.

Every one of you should constantly analyse and think about whether you have the same spirit and devotion for serving your religion that the female companions of the Holy Prophet^{sa} had? **Ask yourselves if you have the same true and sincere love for Allah the Almighty and His noble Messenger^{sa} as the companions did.** Reflect upon whether you have acquired the religious knowledge and insight needed to fulfil your duties. Consider if you are a true role model for your children and if you are bringing them up in the same righteous way that the companions raised their children.

If the answer to these questions is “no” you should be very worried and concerned and it is also a cause of deep concern for the entire Jama’at. Let it be clear that you – our Ahmadi women and girls – are not living lives without purpose; rather, you all have extremely great objectives, which I hope and pray you understand and strive to fulfil.

Propagate Islam’s teachings through *Tabligh*:

In this era, one of the foremost objectives for our Lajna members is *Tabligh* [preaching and propagation] and to fulfil this responsibility you must first spiritually reform yourself. You must personally set the best example, and fulfil your duty to morally train and educate your children, and you must be their guide and attach them to the Jama’at from a young age.

Only then can you fulfil your responsibilities in the field of *Tabligh*.

In this era, there is an urgent need for our women to portray Islam's true teachings and to spread them far and wide. Without any fear or complex, you must propagate Islam by practicing its teachings. If anyone claims that Islam does not give women freedom or that they are oppressed by men, it is your duty to show the world that Islam has given you true freedom, true liberty and true enlightenment!

It is your duty to show the world that whatever restrictions exist are not forced upon you by men, but rather are willingly and freely adopted, having observed the magnificent teachings of Islam. If you do not wish to mingle freely with men or to sit alongside them it is your own choice, made of your own volition, in order to preserve your honour and dignity. If you do not choose to shake the hands of men, it is because your heart demands that you follow Islam's teachings, which provide true dignity for women. Such conduct is not based on the demands of men but is the result of your freedom to make your own decisions and is a symbol of true independence.

Remember, following the crowd and bowing to the influences of society is not freedom; rather, true freedom is having the strength to follow your beliefs and to act upon your convictions. Until the voice of your hearts does not emit pure love for Allah the Almighty and His Messenger^{sa}, in the way of Hazrat Umar's^{ra} sister, or the elderly lady whose husband, brother and son were martyred, we cannot influence the

wider world and we cannot bring about that spiritual revolution that is destined to occur.

As I said, in this era, our women must propagate Islam and especially when it comes to women's issues, it is much more effective for women to respond than for any man to do so on their behalf. Every woman should pay careful attention to this and seek to gain knowledge of their faith so that they can refute the allegations directed at Islam and be ready for every sacrifice for the sake of their religion.

Thus, I ask all of you to understand and assume your responsibilities and to fulfil your pledge to morally train the next generation in the best way and to bring your children close to the Jama'at. I ask all of you to be ready to propagate Islam's teachings through *Tabligh*, within your own circles and especially to women.

If you understand your responsibilities, I am sure that you will prove to be successful mothers, and successful Ahmadi Muslim women who are ready for every sacrifice for the sake of giving precedence to their faith over all worldly matters. If you understand your duties, I am sure you will be successful in spreading the message of Islam Ahmadiyyat far and wide. Only then will you have fulfilled the requirements and obligations of your *Bai'at*. May Allah enable you all to do so. May Allah continue to bless Lajna Imaillah UK and indeed our Lajna organisations throughout the world – *Ameen*.

Now join me in silent prayer – *Dua*

Address to
Waqfaat-e-Nau
at the National Ijtema
Waqfaat-e-Nau UK
delivered on
24th February 2018

The High Status of Women in Islam

After reciting Tashhahud, Ta'awwuz and Surah Al-Fatihah, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} said:

'Alhamdulillah, today you are holding your Waqfaat-e-Nau Ijtema. I hope that you will have benefitted from the event. In the UK, there are more than 2500 female members of the Waqf-e-Nau scheme and this represents approximately 44% of the number of Waqf-e-Nau in this country. Hence, the proportion of women and girls is very significant and important to the future of our Jama'at and indeed to the wider world.

In the establishment and development of any nation or community, the women play a fundamental and vital role, **as the responsibility for the training of the future generations lies in the hands of mothers. They are the nation builders.** Amongst you there are many Waqfaat-e-Nau who are now yourselves mothers, or are at an age where you will soon be married, *Insha'Allah*. Even the younger ones present will in a few years reach a similar age, *Insha'Allah* and so they too will one day take up the mantle of training the coming generations. Thus, you must all understand your responsibilities.

Take pride in the fact that your primary duty is to raise the standards of the future generations, by setting the very highest standards for them to learn from and follow. It is your task to guide your children in a way that they understand their faith and come to live their lives according to the true teachings of Islam. **This is a great responsibility and**

challenge for all of you because you are the ones who can facilitate and unlock the doors to a spiritual revolution in society.

Undoubtedly, it is essential for all Ahmadi Muslims to set a pious example for their children, however it is particularly important for you, members of the Waqf-e-Nau scheme or Waqfaat-e-Nau, to set the highest standards, because your parents pledged your lives for the sake of your faith and upon reaching maturity, you have voluntarily renewed that pledge. Therefore, it is essential that you live your lives according to the commands of Allah and follow the teachings of the Holy Prophet^{sa} at all times. **Seek to replicate those levels of faith and morals that were displayed by the early Muslim women in the time of the Holy Prophet^{sa}.**

We are extremely fortunate because, in this age, Allah the Almighty has blessed us with the advent of the Promised Messiah^{as}, who has enlightened us about the true teachings of Islam. Throughout his life, the Promised Messiah^{as} shined an incandescent light upon our faith, illuminating the path towards Allah the Almighty. Hence, it should not be that whilst growing up in the Western world, you start to adopt those habits or beliefs that are contrary to the teachings of Islam.

Women's rights:

By all means, adopt those things that are good in society, but never forget that our true guiding light is, and always will be, the Holy Qur'an and that our true role model is the Holy Prophet of Islam^{sa}. Rather than following the superficial

glamour of the world, or being influenced by modern trends that come and go, we must follow and heed the everlasting and timeless teachings of the Holy Qur'an. In today's world, much is said and spoken about women's rights, by those people and nations that are said to be extremely modern and developed. Yet, what they neglect to mention is that, until just a few decades ago, they failed to provide women with any rights whatsoever. When the men of these nations finally chose to grant some rights to women, it was done more to show that they were in favour of equality, whereas the truth was that their slogans in favour of women were often hollow and insincere.

Any rights granted to women in recent times have been the result of necessity, rather than any deep desire for progress and also as a means for the men to fulfil their own selfish desires. This is something that history has proven time and again. Furthermore, it is only in recent times that non-Muslim women have realised that they too had rights. Due to the fact that they were previously deprived and their religions had not protected them, such women have campaigned for those things that are considered rights in the eyes of the world. Yet, from the very outset, Islam established the rights of women based upon their role in society and keeping their best interests at heart. Certainly, the rights afforded by Islam are based on wisdom and human nature.

Once, Hazrat Musleh-e-Maud^{ra} [Worldwide Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community from 1914-1965], whilst addressing Ahmadi women, mentioned that worldly women, or those from other religions, often raised slogans calling for equality and this had led to some Muslim women's groups to

voice similar demands. Speaking of those Muslim groups, Hazrat Musleh-e-Maud^{ra} narrated a story in which a jackal was seen running away at great speed. Upon this, someone asked him why he was running and the jackal replied that the king had ordered for all camels to be rounded up and seized. The person asked the jackal why he was running away, when the instruction of the king was for camels. In reply, the jackal said that perhaps the king will also say that jackals should be seized and so that is why I am running away.

Hazrat Musleh-e-Maud^{ra} said that the Muslim groups were like that jackal whereby they were needlessly being led down the wrong path by women's activists, or Christian or Hindu groups, seeking rights. When Allah the Almighty had already granted true equality to Muslim women, why should you follow those who have not been given rights in their religion? So instead of following them, you should see your own religious book which has given you rights.

Further, another characteristic of this era, is that women have sought their rights from men and, as a result, some men have also formed groups in order to promote the rights of women. However, Ahmadi women should ask themselves that, who are men to bestow rights upon them when their Creator, Allah the Almighty, has Himself bestowed upon them all that they need and desire? They should understand that Allah has granted them true equality based on logic and wisdom. Indeed, the way in which women have been described in the Holy Qur'an, and the way in which it has established their rights, is completely unique and not found in any other religious scripture.

Women in Islam:

Indeed, if we look at other religions, some have claimed that women do not even have a soul, whilst others have taught that women are born sinners or that women are the root of evil. Many other derogatory and entirely unjust claims about women have been made by other religions during the course of time, yet Islamic teachings are completely different and are crystal clear that women are not inferior to men in any way whatsoever. Thus, **where the Holy Qur'an mentions 'believing men,' it also mentions 'believing women.'** This is **true equality.**

If we look at Islamic history, we need only to look at the example of Hazrat Ayesha^{ra} [wife of the Holy Prophet^{sa}] who attained a great status and who till this day continues to be an example, not only for Muslim women, but also for Muslim men. Where we hold her in high esteem because she was the wife of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, we also respect and honour her for her own personal qualities, nobility and achievements and she will always remain a role model for Muslims. When we compare and contrast the status bestowed upon women in Islam compared to other religions, it is like night and day.

For example, according to the Bible, on one occasion Mary^{ra}, mother of Jesus^{as}, came to meet her son, but Jesus^{as} did not receive her or even acknowledge her presence and simply asked, "Who is my mother?"¹ If a person's mother is not even granted basic rights, then what rights can a wife expect or indeed any other woman?

As I said before, certain other religious teachings have even claimed that women do not possess a soul and so their status is completely demeaned and devalued. Yet, on the other hand, Islam has said that paradise lies under the feet of one's mother. In light of this, if Muslim women join the choruses of worldly women, seeking to ascertain freedoms and rights, it is futile and needless, because Allah the Almighty has already bestowed true freedom upon Muslim women and made women's rights an inherent part of Islam that no one has the right to infringe upon.

Equal rights given to women by Islam:

There are many examples of the equal rights given to women by Islam. For example, it is incumbent on a husband to give a fair dowry to his wife at the time of *nikah* [Islamic wedding ceremony]. Sadly, some men do not pay the dowry, but that is due to their negligence and error and is against Islam's teachings. Where the Jama'at is informed of such cases, it seeks to enforce the husband to pay the dowry, because it is the Islamic right of the woman to receive it. Similarly, when it comes to marriage, it is essential that the bride consents freely and happily, without any form of coercion or pressure. Forced marriage is completely wrong and a grave violation of Islamic teaching.

Further, where it is only in the recent past that non-Muslim women have been granted the right to inherit, Islam granted women the right to inheritance more than 1400 years ago. Moreover, at a time when girls were generally deprived of education, Islam championed their right to learning and

categorically stated that every girl should be provided education and the means to better herself.

Islam has even guided us on the smallest matters and turned our attention towards true equality in all matters. For example, Islam teaches that if a mother is breastfeeding her child, it is for both her and her husband to decide together when is the right time to transition away from breastfeeding. No other religion has guided its followers and enlightened them in the way that Islam has.

Also, if a woman herself chooses to waive some of her rights, it should not be misinterpreted to suggest that Islam has somehow not given women their due rights. There are certain narrations where Muslim women, perhaps for cultural or traditional reasons, chose to waive their rights, but that was their personal choice and not due to any religious reason. Anyway, no one who looks at Islam's teachings in a fair and impartial way can deny the fact that **Islam has enshrined women's rights and has granted them freedom and equality.**

Muslim women have no need to campaign or advocate for their rights; rather all they need is to understand their faith so that they fully comprehend the rights that Islam has granted them. Only then will they be in a position to utilise those rights for their benefit and progress. Allah the Almighty has Himself established the rights of women and so it is essential that you read the Holy Qur'an and its commentaries and you study the *Hadith* and the books of the Promised Messiah^{as}. By doing so, you will gain knowledge of your faith and it will remove any lingering traces of an inferiority

complex, or a belief that Muslim women have been deprived in any way.

Beautiful teachings of Islam:

On the contrary, if you know your faith, you will soon realise that Muslim women are the most fortunate people, because their rights and their status have been established and eternally protected by Allah the Almighty and His noble Prophet^{sa}. It is not just enough to understand your rights, but at this time, in this era, it is up to Ahmadi Muslims to educate and inform other people and other communities about what Islam has given them. You should let the world know that you do not aspire to follow the ways of today's so-called developed and progressive people and nor do you have any need to demand your rights. You are already the recipients of all that you need and desire. Rather than following the world, you, as members of Waqf-e-Nau, are the people who have voluntarily presented yourselves for a lifetime of service to your faith so that you can guide the world.

It is incumbent upon you to manifest and proclaim the beautiful teachings of Islam at every opportunity. Even if you are not officially working full-time for the Jama'at, as Waqf-e-Nau, you should present yourselves for service to Lajna Ima'illah [women's auxiliary of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community], whilst in your personal lives, you must always illustrate the magnificent teachings of Islam. It is your mission to help and guide not only your own children, but also other Ahmadi girls and women and indeed those people who are not members of our Jama'at. For example, sometimes Ahmadi girls feel a degree of complex or even

embarrassment regarding the hijab and Islam's teachings regarding modest dress. They feel that it is difficult to adopt this religious teaching whilst living in the Western world in this modern era. In this regard, you must set a personal example. It is imperative that members of the Waqfaat-e-Nau scheme always keep their clothing modest and decent and set an example for other Ahmadi women and girls to follow. Once an Ahmadi girl reaches an age of maturity she should cover her head with a scarf and wear loose clothing so that her body is not on display for all to see.

Righteousness and morality:

As I said at the beginning, there are more than 2500 members of the Waqfaat-e-Nau scheme in the United Kingdom and, at least I hope half of them, have reached an age of maturity or even more and so they should observe hijab. If you set a positive example in this regard you can, and will, be role models for other Ahmadis and the rest of the world will come to recognise you for your decency and modesty. You will set an example of righteousness and morality that will inspire others and will prove that you are people who choose to follow your faith and that you are the standard bearers for Islam and for women's rights in this era. You will be the ones who lead others towards genuine progress and development, rather than simply following the crowd towards meaningless material pursuits.

Another issue debated and often condemned in Western society, is the fact that men and women are kept at a certain distance in Islam. For example, a lot is made of the fact that Muslim men and women choose not to shake hands with

people of the opposite sex, or prefer to sit and worship separately. Yet, as time goes by, even those who criticise such beliefs are coming to realise the wisdom that underpins our values. For example, I mentioned once before that a prominent lady in Sweden has proposed 'women-only' concerts, whilst at the recent New Year's celebrations in Berlin, a segregated area only for women was erected and was actually called a 'safe-zone' by the German authorities. Both in Sweden and in Berlin, they had to take this action due to the indecent way in which men had sexually abused and harassed women in previous years.

Furthermore, in recent months, there has been a huge scandal in the American film industry, after it emerged that male film producers, or other men in similar positions, had abused their power and had attacked and harassed women for many years with impunity. This scandal further escalated after it emerged that sexual abuse and inappropriate behaviour had occurred in many other sectors of society. The question is, why were women abused across the world? The answer, whether they like it or not, is the free-mixing that took place which meant that the women were unable to safeguard themselves.

Furthermore, these incidents have also shown that whilst many men have spoken out in favour of freedom of women, often their true motivation was to fulfil their own selfish and immoral desires. They sought opportunities to take advantage of women and to mentally or physically abuse them, and in some cases, it escalated to what can only be termed as torture. In light of all this, and the fact that there are great efforts being made to undermine and defame Islam, **it is the**

duty and responsibility of all Ahmadi women to explain to the people of the world the beauty of Islam's teachings.

Certainly, members of Waqfaat-e-Nau scheme should be spearheading this effort, and so without any fear or complex, you should openly proclaim the fact that you take pride in your modest dress, in your hijab and in keeping a distance from men. You should openly declare that these are the essential safeguards that Allah the Almighty has chosen in order to protect women, and so rather than being a restriction, hijab is actually a supreme right and protection afforded to Muslim women.

Remember, the Promised Messiah^{as} once said that those who object to Islam's teachings of purdah should first reform the nature of men, because regrettably, many men are unable to control themselves and pursue opportunities to abuse women and to usurp their rights. The Promised Messiah^{as} compared such men to a hungry dog, who would immediately pounce when some bread was placed before him.

As I have said, **as Waqfaat-e-Nau, it is your mission to not only personally reflect Islam's teachings, but to spread them far and wide.** Whilst Ahmadi girls are unable to study in Jamia Ahmadiyya [seminary for training missionaries of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community], it is imperative that you all have a deep understanding of your religion. Thus, as I said earlier, you will need to read the Holy Qur'an, the *Hadith* and the books of the Promised Messiah^{as}, as they will provide you with the knowledge of your faith. The more you increase your knowledge, both individually and as a collective body, the quicker you will be able to bring mankind back

towards its Creator and you will be able to play your role in saving this world from the destruction it is charging towards, due to the ever-increasing immodesty and immorality prevailing in society.

Finally, before concluding, I also wish to mention that in the Jama'at, there is also a great demand for doctors and teachers and so as many Ahmadi girls as possible who are part of the Waqf-e-Nau scheme, should also try to fill this need by training in these fields.

At the end, I hope and pray that you all reflect upon what I have said, and seek to attain the highest standards in your religious training and education and that you are never prone to any form of inferiority complex. I pray that you are the shining stars who leave a spiritual trail behind for others to follow and learn from.

May Allah the Almighty bless all your good efforts, and enable you all to fulfil the true spirit of that pledge that you have made, to serve your faith throughout your lives.

Now join me in silent prayer.'

Address to
Lajna Ima'illah
at the 40th National Ijtema
Lajna Ima'illah UK
delivered on
30th September 2018

True spirit of Ahmadi Muslim Women

After reciting Tashahhud, Ta'awwuz and Surah Al-Fatihah, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} said:

Ijtema an excellent platform for the Tarbiyyat:

"Alhamdulillah, once again Allah the Almighty has enabled Lajna Imaillah UK to hold its National Ijtema this weekend. The main purpose of the Ijtema is to provide an opportunity for you to join together, so that the spirit of unity amongst Lajna Imaillah increases and to hold various programmes, which are a means of spiritual and moral development and which increase the religious knowledge of the participants. In addition, various other activities, including sports, are held so that Lajna members of all ages find something of their interest and are able to participate in one way or another. Through such participation, the attendees derive benefit from the spiritual atmosphere of the Ijtema. Similarly, there are also various presentations, events and competitions for Nasirat so that our young girls can also benefit from the religious environment of the Ijtema and learn about the importance of morality and virtue, and increase their religious knowledge. Such programmes also help foster a love for the Jama'at and sense of allegiance to it from a young age. In this way, the Lajna Ijtema provides an excellent platform for the Tarbiyyat of our Ahmadi Muslim women and girls and I hope and pray that this Ijtema has proved beneficial to all. Anyway, today, I wish to remind all of you about the immense value of remaining firm in your faith and being ready to offer any sacrifice for the sake of your religion and beliefs. Certainly, for

any true religious community, it is essential that its followers consider their religion, and of course nation and community, to be of paramount importance and be ready to make sacrifices for its cause. Unless we constantly seek to increase our faith and to live by our religious teachings, our verbal utterances are meaningless and entirely disingenuous.

Give precedence to faith over all worldly matters:

For us, Ahmadi Muslims, it is even more imperative that we live our lives according to the teachings of our religion. We must be ever attentive to the demands of our faith, because we claim to have accepted that person, who was sent by Allah the Almighty, as the Imam of the Age, as the true servant of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}, and who was sent for the revival of the true teachings of Islam. Indeed, we have taken the oath of allegiance of that person, who was sent by Allah the Almighty, with two outstanding objectives. **Firstly, he was sent to draw humanity back towards its Creator to re-establish a spiritual bond between God Almighty and mankind and, secondly, he was sent to urge all human beings to fulfil the rights of one another and to uphold human values.** Certainly, the Promised Messiah^{as} illuminated the world with the resplendent light of Islamic teachings and, according to the command of Allah, he established a community of followers whose sole objective was to act upon those pristine teachings. Given this, we who have accepted him, should always be conscious of the fact that it is our foremost obligation to live our lives according to Islam and, for this, we must be ready to make any sacrifice required of us for the sake of our faith. It is quite easy to say that you are willing

to make sacrifices for your beliefs but, in reality, until a person gives precedence to his or her faith over all worldly matters, they will not be ready to make genuine sacrifices. In the Lajna pledge, Ahmadi women proclaim that they are ready to sacrifice everything for the sake of their religion and nation, whilst in the Nasirat pledge, our young girls vow to serve their religion, country and nation. Hence, all of you must solemnly reflect upon these words and strive to practically uphold them at every corner and every turn in your lives. Be amongst those women and girls, who light up the world through their sincerity, morality and through their readiness to give up everything for the sake of their religion and nation. Such pious and exemplary standards of sacrifice can only be achieved if you are mindful of following the commands of Allah the Almighty in every respect. This is why the Promised Messiah^{as} once said: No one can be purified until God Almighty does not make them so. Naturally, the question arises that how can we be purified by God Almighty? In answer to this very question, the Promised Messiah^{as} said: When a person approaches God Almighty with complete humility, meekness and devotion, his prayers are accepted by Him and he becomes righteous. He attains the ability to understand the faith of the Holy Prophet^{sa}. Without this, no matter how often a person verbally professes his faith or religion and no matter how much he worships, it is nothing except mere words and meaningless rituals and simply following the customs of one's forefathers. There is no truth or spirituality to it. Consequently, a spirit of sacrifice will only develop inside you when you attain spirituality through a personal relationship with Allah the Almighty and for this, you must earnestly bow

down before Him with absolute humility. **A willingness to make sacrifices for your faith is only possible if you are constantly trying to morally improve and increase in righteousness.** Only then can a person be counted amongst those who are really giving precedence to their faith over all worldly matters. In light of this, it is up to every Ahmadi Muslim to self-assess and monitor whether they are moving towards Allah the Almighty and developing a relationship with Him.

Outstanding Muslim women:

Unquestionably, out of His sheer grace and mercy, Allah the Almighty has bestowed, and continues to bestow, the Jama'at of the Promised Messiah^{as} with countless devoted women who have understood the demands of their faith and acted upon them, no matter the grave trials or tribulations that ensued. Such women have excelled in piety, righteousness and virtue. They have made colossal sacrifices for their faith and have followed in the golden footsteps of those outstanding Muslim women who sacrificed everything for the sake of their religion in the early Islamic period. It is often easier for people to relate to real-life examples and so I shall now mention some of the Ahmadi women who have made great sacrifices for the sake of Ahmadiyyat in recent years. Their cases testify to the fact that a spirit of true sacrifice is alive and well within our Jama'at. The first lady I shall mention is Anjum sahiba from Canada, who accepted Ahmadiyyat after substantial research and investigation. Ultimately, she came to the realisation that the Promised Messiah^{as} was the true representative of the Holy Prophet^{sa} in this era. She

understood that whatever the Promised Messiah^{as} taught was a manifestation of the original teachings of Islam and she realised that the way to attain Allah's favour was to join the blessed community of the Promised Messiah^{as} and to be ready for whatever sacrifices were required. Thereafter, in reality, she did have to make many sacrifices for the sake of her faith. After she took Bai'at in 1994, her husband became infuriated and tried his utmost to force her to abandon her faith in Ahmadiyyat. He forcefully prevented her from attending the Friday prayers, or any other Jama'at events, and even brought some non-Ahmadi Maulawies into their home, who tried to coerce her to leave Ahmadiyyat. However, their concerted efforts proved to be in vain. No matter how cruelly she was pressured, harassed and persecuted, she remained firm in her faith and displayed exemplary steadfastness. As a result, her husband mercilessly removed her and their three children from the family home and threw them onto the streets. As she had nowhere else to go, Anjum sahiba took her children to a motel where they stayed for some days. Upon this, her family spread rumours that Ahmadis were funding her, but this was completely wrong. In fact, where she had previously lived comfortably, she took work as a domestic cleaner to earn just enough money to shelter and feed her children. Despite the harrowing change of circumstances she was forced to endure, her resolve never faltered. She did not let the intense pressure she faced lessen her faith even an iota. After some time passed, she received marriage proposals from non-Ahmadi men, but she rejected each one and said that she would only ever marry an Ahmadi man. Upon this, one man who had proposed to her was so impressed by her faith that he began

to learn about Ahmadiyyat and soon he was also convinced by the truth of the Promised Messiah^{as}. They later married and, ever since, their family has maintained a loyal and sincere relationship with the Jama'at. Accordingly, this brave lady, not only guarded her own faith and that of her children, but also brought a non-Ahmadi into the fold of Ahmadiyyat. Another lady, Noor Jahan sahiba from Calcutta in India, accepted Ahmadiyyat in 1981. A major reason she converted was after seeing how the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was engaged in the service of Islam by doing Tabligh throughout the world. She was particularly moved by the fact that the Jama'at had established a system of financial sacrifice, that is Chanda, with the purpose of propagating Islam far and wide. She observed her Ahmadi friends, who were very regular in paying Chanda, and, after some time, told them that she also wished to donate some money as sacrifice. However, she was informed that the Jama'at only accepted Chanda from Ahmadi and so could not accept her offer. Upon this, she informed that she had read several books published by the Jama'at and already considered herself to be an Ahmadi in her heart, even if she had not officially taken the Bai'at. Due to her ardent desire to take partake in Chanda, she openly took Bai'at, despite the fact that her father and other relatives immediately turned against her. They harassed and abused her and she had to endure a period of severe financial hardship. However, Allah the Almighty rewarded her patience and sacrifices, as she got a job at a school and was subsequently appointed as headmistress. Furthermore, rather than her being led away from Ahmadiyyat by her family, the opposite proved true because the rest of her family came to accept Ahmadiyyat

eventually. Alhamdulillah. Another lady I wish to mention is Raeesa sahiba, from Kanpur in India. When she accepted Ahmadiyyat along with her children, she had to pass through many struggles. Even before accepting Ahmadiyyat, her financial circumstances were dire and she made a very basic living selling bangles in different villages. After taking Bai'at, she was forced to withstand even greater hardships and worries, because much of her family turned against her. However, with the grace of Allah, Allah the Almighty rewarded her patience, because soon her material state began to improve and instead of having to travel to the villages, she was able to establish her own independent shop. Seeing how Allah the Almighty had improved her circumstances increased her faith even more. Hence, where previously she was living a very impoverished life, she is now at the forefront of making financial sacrifices for the sake of her faith. I also wish to narrate a faith-inspiring incident of a lady, Sanjeeda sahiba, from India. In the year 2000, her husband accepted Ahmadiyyat and he preached to her and soon she also accepted the truth of the Promised Messiah^{as}. Following her Bai'at, her own family turned vehemently against her and completely disowned her. They physically beat her and sought to intimidate her with various threats. Yet, she showed remarkable courage and stayed firm in her faith. She was originally from a wealthy family, but after accepting Ahmadiyyat her father told her that she would be cut off from the family inheritance and all her rights, unless she revoked her belief in the Promised Messiah^{as}. Upon this, Sanjeeda sahiba replied to her father saying: You are trying to force me to give up my faith, by cutting me off from this worldly

inheritance, but let me tell you that, in return for forsaking these few rupees, Allah the Almighty has already given me a priceless reward worth more than all the money in the world in the shape of Ahmadiyyat. Thus, I swear that I do not care even in the slightest for the loss of any material wealth or my share of the family inheritance! Similarly, another Indian lady, Alfa sahiba, from Korea in District Sitapur accepted Ahmadiyyat, even though all the other people in her village were non-Ahmadis. As a result, she was subjected to horrific persecution and even her parents threatened her and mocked her. They tauntingly asked her: Who now will marry your daughters? They will be left all alone as spinsters! Upon this, Alfa sahiba responded with great forbearance. She said that she had accepted Ahmadiyyat for the sake of Allah the Almighty and was convinced that He would take care of all her needs, no matter what. She said that her daughters would, Insha'Allah, marry Ahmadi Muslims. With the grace of Allah, her resolute patience and steadfastness has been rewarded, wherein two of her daughters are now happily married with Ahmadi missionaries/mu'alims (religious teachers), whilst she was close to arranging a match for her other daughter with a good-natured Ahmadi youth at the time this incident was recorded. In Spain, an Ahmadi lady, Wafaa sahiba, had to endure many problems and anxieties after accepting Ahmadiyyat. For example, her husband divorced her, but this did not weaken her faith and she bore this trial with great fortitude. Alhamdulillah, later she was blessed by Allah the Almighty with a good and happy marriage to an Arab Ahmadi. With the grace of Allah, she continues to excel in righteousness and financial sacrifice for the sake of the

Jama'at. Similarly, there is a lady in Palestine who, after accepting Ahmadiyyat, has faced a lot of persecution and endured many cruelties. She has even been taken to court over her religious beliefs. Her husband has divorced her, but not once has her faith in Ahmadiyyat lessened and she continues to display exemplary patience and is fulfilling her pledge of giving whatever sacrifice her faith requires. Furthermore, Allah the Almighty has also given the Jama'at such honourable and devout women who have given their lives for the sake of their faith and joined the esteemed ranks of the martyrs. For example, in 2011, an Ahmadi Muslim lady, Maryam Khatoon sahiba, from Layyah in Pakistan was martyred when she was attacked by non-Ahmadis. Just aged 26, and the mother to three young children, Maryam sahiba was fired upon by anti-Ahmadi opponents in her home and due to the severity of the injuries, she was martyred at the scene. These are just a handful of incidents, which illustrate that in different nations across the world, Ahmadi Muslim women are giving whatever sacrifices are required by their faith. Moreover, many women have accepted Ahmadiyyat after seeing dreams testifying to the truth of the Promised Messiah^{as}. Such women have gone on to become exemplary Ahmadi Muslims and excelled in righteousness and their faith and spirit of sacrifice have continued to increase. For example, a lady from a village in the African country of Guinea Bissau narrates that she saw a dream in which the local Ahmadi missionary presented her with a book and told her that her salvation lay in that book. Upon opening it, she saw a photo of a person and asked the missionary who it was. In reply, he said: This is a photo of Khalifatul Masih. After waking up, the

next day she went to visit the same missionary and narrated her dream. Upon this, the missionary said that Allah the Almighty has shown you a clear sign of the truth of Ahmadiyyat. The lady responded by stating that she was well aware that Allah has given her a very clear message and so she had come to take the Bai'at and was ready for any sacrifice the Jama'at required of her. Ever since accepting Ahmadiyyat, she has excelled in offering financial sacrifices and very bravely she goes out to do Tabligh and tells people her own story about how Allah guided her to Ahmadiyyat. Similarly, an Ahmadi man from Bangladesh, Palaash sahib, narrates an incident about his wife who was a teacher. When the school administration where she worked learned she was an Ahmadi, they became highly agitated and told her to leave Ahmadiyyat. Alternatively, they said that she should, at the very least, publicly announce that she was a Christian, even if her heart remained as an Ahmadi. Upon this, the lady said: I accepted Ahmadiyyat after seeing a dream testifying to its truth. We offer Namaz five times a day. How then can I now call myself a Christian? I can leave my job but I can never ever leave Ahmadiyyat. It is not just Lajna members who are making sacrifices for the sake of their faith. Even young Nasirat are setting an example for others in this regard. For example, in Bangladesh, there is a village where there are just a handful of Ahmadis and they have been subjected to intense persecution and have suffered every type of social boycott and pressure. Even a ten-year-old Ahmadi girl, in Year 4 at school, was not spared from these cruelties. Whilst at school, her teachers told her that her father was now a Christian and that he was destined for hell. They cursed and abused him in

front of this little girl. They also tried to influence her by promising her a beautiful home and the best food and schooling if she separated from her father. Upon this, the little girl remained strong and said: My father cannot be hell-bound because he is regular in Namaz and neither can he be a Christian as Christians do not perform Namaz! She said: I will never leave my Jama'at or my father, no matter what you offer me. In fact, after seeing the example of my father, my belief in Ahmadiyyat is even stronger. This story was narrated by the father of the girl himself and, as he told this story, he broke down in tears as he recalled the pious example of his daughter. I have presented a few modern day examples to show you how Allah the Almighty continues to manifest the truth of the Promised Messiah^{as} throughout the world and how He is instilling a spirit of sincere sacrifice within Ahmadi Muslim women and girls across the world. As I mentioned, many Ahmadi Muslim women have had to endure horrific cruelties and hardships and some have even given their lives for the sake of the faith. With the Grace of Allah, those noble women never shirked from the challenges they faced, rather their response to such hatred and injustice was to increase in their devotion to Ahmadiyyat and being more determined to live their lives as true servants of Islam. **For as long as this incredible spirit of sacrifice remains within our Jama'at, rest assured that no one can ever weaken or harm the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Insha'Allah.** Whilst, our opponents concoct many plans and hatch countless schemes in order to destroy the Jama'at they will never prove successful, Insha'Allah. Certainly, the opponents of Ahmadiyyat will continue to make threats against us, but their

attempts will never reap any fruit, because the faith that exists amongst Ahmadi Muslim men, women and children ensures that the Community of the Promised Messiah^{as} will continue to flourish and prosper no matter what. However, there is one note of caution I wish to add. Whilst, Ahmadi Muslims throughout the world continue to serve the Jama'at and to make sacrifices, each Ahmadi Muslim must pay personal attention to make sure that he or she does not personally fall behind. Every Ahmadi Muslim should ensure that his or her standards never slip. Always seek to increase your faith and to travel on those blessed paths that Allah the Almighty has Himself commanded us to walk upon. Always strive to fulfil the objectives for which the Promised Messiah^{as} was sent. Tread upon those golden walkways that lead to directly to Him. **Pay heed to the words and instructions of the Promised Messiah^{as}, who has taught us how to attain the love of our Creator.** On one occasion, the Promised Messiah^{as} said: A believer is he who is utterly loyal to God Almighty. Once he has believed then why would he fret over any threat? For he has declared that he will give precedence to his faith over all worldly matters...When one forgoes his home, his people and all his comforts for the sake of God Almighty then God Himself provides for him everything he needs. The Promised Messiah^{as} further said: You should remain patient and steadfast like the truthful people because Allah the Almighty forever helps the truthful and raises them to an esteemed status. The Promised Messiah^{as} continued: Now, Allah the Almighty is establishing a community of the truthful! Whosoever is not sincere or truthful will depart - if not today, then certainly tomorrow! And they will be separate from our

fold. However, God Almighty will never forsake those who are honest and true. Hence, we should always strive to ensure that we remain amongst the truthful and never weaken in our faith, God forbid. May we always remain firm in our belief that we have taken the Bai'at of that person, who was sent by Allah the Almighty according to the prophecies of the Holy Prophet of Islam^{sa}. We have accepted that person who was sent in complete servitude of the Holy Prophet^{sa} and who was bestowed by Allah with the status of a non-law bearing prophet and was the Imam Mahdi and Promised Messiah^{as}. It was he, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian^{as}, who, in this era, due to his heartache and anguish at the state to which Muslims had descended, established a pious community of the truthful. Always remember that every act and every instruction of the Promised Messiah^{as} was in accordance with commands of Allah the Almighty and the teachings of the noble Prophet of Islam^{sa}. Thus, it is my ardent desire and prayer that Allah the Almighty enables all Ahmadi Muslims to remain firmly attached to the Promised Messiah^{as} and to follow his teachings and guidance in every single matter. Further, may every Ahmadi Muslim remain firmly attached to the institution of Khilafate-Ahmadiyya which, according to the Promise of Allah, was established following the demise of the Promised Messiah^{as}. Always pray that you remain steadfast in your faith. Rest assured, if you remain firmly attached to Ahmadiyyat, Allah the Almighty will never forsake you. Instead, He will grant you the status of a true believer and count you amongst the truthful. May Allah the Almighty enable the faith of every Ahmadi Muslim to constantly increase and may every Ahmadi truly uphold their claim of

giving precedence to their religion over all worldly matters. Furthermore, you should endeavour to nurture and morally guide your children so that they are also raised in a pious fashion and with firm faith in the truth of Ahmadiyyat. Instil in them the true values of Islam so that they too grow up into model citizens who are ever-ready to give whatever sacrifice is required for the sake of their faith and nation. As long as Allah the Almighty continues to bless our Jama'at with noble women and devoted mothers, who fulfil their own pledges and who train their children to be pious ambassadors and servants of Ahmadiyyat, any and every attempt to harm or destroy our Jama'at will be doomed to fail. Always remember that it is the promise of Allah that He will ensure that the Jama'at continues to grow and we are all witnesses to how He is fulfilling this promise each and every day. Only due to His help and grace, our Jama'at continues to prosper and flourish and, Insha'Allah, always will. The only question is who will be the fortunate ones who forever remain part of this blessed community? Certainly, all Ahmadi Muslims who remain firm in their faith will be a part of the fulfilment of the grand promise of God, whilst those who are not truthful will separate from God's pious community, as the Promised Messiah^{as} foretold. With all my heart, I pray that may Allah the Almighty enable every person who accepts Ahmadiyyat to remain a sincere member of the Jama'at and to stay amongst those counted as truthful believers. May Allah the Almighty protect every Ahmadi Muslim from negligence or weakness in faith and keep them under His Divine shade.

In the end, I pray that may Allah the Almighty continue to bless Lajna Imaillah in all respects. Ameen.

Address to
Waqfaat-e-Nau
at the National Ijtema
Waqfaat-e-Nau UK,
delivered on
6th April 2019

After reciting Tashahhud, Ta'awwuz and Surah Al-Fatihah, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} said:

“With the Grace of Allah Ta’alah, once again you are holding the Waqfat-e-Nau National Ijtema. I hope that you will have all benefitted from the various programmes and events that have taken place.

Fulfil the rights of worship:

Just like other Ahmadi girls in the UK, you have grown up in this Western society; however, you are distinct from them in one significant respect, which is that your parents, prior to your birth, dedicated your future lives for the sake of your faith. Your parents prayed that Allah the Almighty enables you to serve Islam and to play a distinguished role in spreading its teachings far and wide. In light of this, always remember that you must constantly strive to learn and act upon the teachings of Islam.

For any Ahmadi, in fact, for any Muslim, the most basic obligation is to fulfil the rights of the worship of Allah. Thus, the very first thing I wish to remind you is that you must ensure that you are regular in offering Namaz five times a day. Further, you must offer Namaz sincerely and in a state of complete submission to Allah the Almighty and not in a hurried way just so you can claim to have fulfilled your obligation.

To truly fulfil the rights of worship, you must always keep at the forefront of your mind that you are bowing before Allah

the Almighty, Who is All-Powerful and All-Hearing and you are presenting your heartfelt hopes and desires to Him. Certainly, the foremost aspiration of any member of Waqf-e-Nau, indeed of any true Muslim and of any person who has pledged their life to the service of Islam, should be to attain the nearness of Allah the Almighty. Consequently, it is of absolute importance that you always try to raise the standards of your worship.

The true meaning and interpretation of the Holy Qur'an:

The second principal point I wish to draw to your attention to is that you must bear in mind that the perfect teaching Allah the Almighty has bestowed upon us, in the blessed shape of the Holy Qur'an, is a universal, everlasting and timeless teaching. Every single instruction of the Holy Qur'an is according to human nature and it cannot be suggested that, because the Holy Qur'an was revealed over 1400 years ago, it is out of date or for a bygone era; rather, every word of the Holy Qur'an remains as applicable today as it did in the time of the Holy Prophet^{sa}. Nor is it right to say that because the Qur'an was revealed amongst the Arabs, it is only for the Arab people.

Where the Holy Qur'an's teachings are for the Arab people, they are also for the people of Europe, the Americas, Asia, Africa and all parts of the world. Hence, in all respects, just as the Holy Qur'an was relevant and worthy of practice 1400 years ago, it remains the same today. Therefore, all Waqfat-e-Nau must entirely eliminate from their minds the belief that

Islam is an old-fashioned religion or somehow backward. Instead of being a religion of the past, it is a religion of today and tomorrow and will remain until the end of time, *Insha'Allah*.

Accordingly, no matter what allegations or criticisms are levelled against Islam, you must never feel any embarrassment or complex over your faith. There is no allegation and no criticism that cannot be refuted. The reality is that Allah the Almighty has provided the answer to every charge or accusation made against Islam, whether by non-Muslims or non-religious people, in the Holy Qur'an itself.

Furthermore, we are extremely fortunate that in this era, the Promised Messiah^{as} has enlightened us to the true meaning and interpretation of the Holy Qur'an and equipped us with the intellectual weapons to respond to those who oppose Islam or query it. **Thus to understand the deeper meanings of the Holy Qur'an, it is essential you read the books of the Promised Messiah^{as}, as well as the other books published by the Jama'at.** Certainly, in this era, it is only by reading the books of the Promised Messiah^{as} and his Khulafa that we can truly comprehend our faith and respond to those who level false allegations against Islam.

Many of you are now in your teenage years, whilst some of you are now adults and have been blessed with your own children. As you have reached an age of understanding and maturity, you must make it a habit to set aside time every day to read the books or writings of the Promised Messiah^{as}, as they will furnish you with the necessary means to defend your

religion. On many occasions, I have spoken of how Islam's teachings are extremely comprehensive and far-reaching.

Indeed, the Holy Qur'an is filled from cover to cover with knowledge and direction pertaining to all aspects of your lives and the wider society. The Qur'an guides mankind all the way from the domestic family unit through to international relations. In the same way, Islam has taught us about the rights of the individual, including the rights of children and it has taught us about the rights of the collective, including the rights of government and public.

Propagate the true and peaceful teachings of Islam:

As I have said, the Promised Messiah^{as} has expounded upon these teachings, so that the members of his Jama'at are able to understand their faith and defend it from any criticism or false charge. Hence, you should disregard any hesitation or fear and stand up with certainty and conviction in the truth of your faith and respond to those who seek to defame its pure teachings. Irrespective of whether you are working full-time for the Jama'at or not, as a member of Waqf-e-Nau, it is your duty to propagate the true and peaceful teachings of Islam through your words and conduct.

It has always been my experience that when worldly and materialistic people, who consider themselves to be extremely advanced and educated, are presented with the true beautiful teachings of Islam, they cannot help but be impressed. Particularly, considering the raging conflict and division in the world, when we present Islam's peaceful and

compassionate teachings, it has an extraordinary effect. Many people are left astonished and overwhelmed by the magnificence of Islam's benevolent teachings.

Thus, as sincere Ahmadi Muslim girls and ladies, and as members of the Waqfaat-e-Nau scheme, you should never hold any form of inferiority complex about your religion. Never entertain the thought that your religion is somehow backward or out of touch with the modern world. Conversely, the more you take pride in your religion and the more you live your lives according to the teachings of Islam, the more others will respect you and this is how your honour and dignity will be established in the world. Surely, there is no Islamic teaching that should cause any complex or apprehension to emerge in your minds.

Never worry for a second that others might taunt you or consider you to be a laughing stock because of your religious beliefs.

If they mock, let them!

Some people criticise or deride pardah and hijab, whilst others disparage our way of offering Namaz. Unfortunately, some young Ahmadis, particularly teenagers, develop an inferiority complex or feel humiliated and rejected by such ridicule. However, if you are ever mocked for acting upon your religion, you should never take it as a personal humiliation; rather, you should consider it to be a badge of honour and feel pride in the knowledge that you have stayed strong in your faith in the face of adversity. **Showing patience and keeping**

your head held high in such circumstances is the true means of establishing your honour and self-respect in the world. We are the fortunate ones, as we have not forgotten our values.

Today, most people, especially in the Western world, have lost their true religious identity. Even those who claim themselves to be followers of religion are living lives that bear no correlation to their faith. Whilst many young members of Western society still identify as Christians, in reality, the vast majority are not following the teachings of Christianity and have no affinity or link with the Church. In fact, a consequence of the lack of interest in religion amongst today's youth has been that as the older generation, who were more religiously inclined, have passed on, many churches have been left uninhabited to the point that they are being sold on the open market to the highest bidder. They fail to realise that selling a sacred place of worship is not a trivial or insignificant matter.

Morality and virtue:

Furthermore, in the name of so-called freedom, today's society considers itself to be extremely advanced and progressive and believe they have reached the height of civilisation. Yet, in reality, as society has moved away from religion, moral standards have declined in parallel. In terms of morality and virtue, instead of advancing, modern societies are suffering from deep decay. By separating from God Almighty, humanity is rapidly moving away from basic standards of common decency.

For example, in modern society, it is very normal for children to disrespect their parents and not listen to them. Even a basic level of respect that a child should have for his parents and for his elders is eradicating. This too is classed as 'freedom' and 'independence'. Increasingly, data shows that if parents are firm with their children, it leads to the involvement of the local authorities or even the police being called. As a result, the family unit is breaking down.

Is it a measure of success if more children are being taken into social care or if the authorities are being required to act?

Is this progress? Is this development?

Is this the great achievement of our time?

Now, belatedly, society is starting to understand the harmful consequences of absolute freedom. For example, after observing families being destroyed and the complete lack of respect amongst children for their elders, a few people in Western society are starting to voice their concerns about this issue.

Always remember that the peace of society is directly connected to the peace within families, within that society. **Peace in the home is based on good morals and mutual respect, between a husband and his wife and between the parents and their children.** Thus, always keep in mind that, as members of Waqf-e-Nau, it is essential that you manifest the highest morals at all times.

All of you, whether you are children, teenagers or adults, must fulfil the rights of your parents, your siblings and other family members. Those who are married must treat their children and spouse with love, fulfil their rights and ensure that their home is a mirror reflection of Islam's teachings. As I said before, always remember, that fulfilling the rights of Allah the Almighty and acting upon His teachings, which are immersed within the incomparable treasure that is the Holy Qur'an, must always take precedence in our lives.

Hence, you must read the Holy Qur'an, the commentaries of the Promised Messiah^{as} and of his Khulafa and take pride in the fact that you are the worshippers of a Living God and follow a noble Prophet^{sa} whose teachings will remain forevermore, *Insha'Allah*. Take pride in the fact that your religious belief is your means of success and salvation, both in this world and in the next life. Certainly, if you live your lives according to the teachings of the Holy Qur'an, you will come to observe paradise within your own homes and daily lives.

Progress and prosperity of our Jamaat:

I also wish to remind the parents of Waqf-e-Nau children that they must continually reflect upon the fact that they have pledged their children for the sake of Islam, and so if they do not set a pious example for their children, they will have failed to discharge their duties. They will be blameworthy for the failure of their children to grow into true assets for our Jama'at. To dedicate your child is to make a lifelong commitment to increase your own standards of righteousness, so that you are role models for your children.

Similarly, many Waqfat-e-Nau are now married and have their own children, and so they must solemnly ponder over the pledge first made by their parents, which they have now made for their own progeny, and constantly strive to raise their children in the best possible fashion and set a personal example of piety for them to follow and learn from.

If you live your lives in this way, it will ensure the continued progress and prosperity of our Jamaat, *Insha'Allah*. **The high status of women in Islam is such that it is only through their noble efforts that the coming generations will remain attached to their faith.** Only if mothers play their crucial roles can the great values of our religion remain firmly instilled in our future generations. Otherwise, we could suffer the same fate as other religious communities, who have lost their traditions and values over time.

As I said, Christians are selling churches, whilst some Jewish communities are doing the same with their synagogues. Consequently, if we do not remain devoted to our faith and do not set positive examples for the future generations then our mosques will become empty and hollow shells just as the churches and places of worship of other religions have become. However, *Insha'Allah* this will never happen because it is the promise of Allah Ta'alah that Islam will remain a living religion until the Day of Judgement.

This is why He sent the Promised Messiah^{as} to revive the true teachings of Islam and after his demise, the institution of Khilafat was re-established by Allah the Almighty. Hence, it will not be that our mosques are sold off or that the progress

of our Jama'at will cease. Yet, the lives of those Ahmadis who are neglectful of their duties and who do not remain attached to their faith will be squandered and their future generations will be lost to the materialistic world.

Thus, as Ahmadi women and girls, as mothers and daughters, and as Waqf-e-Zindigi you must understand your duties. Even if you are not working full-time in a Jama'at department, you are all Waqf-e-Zindigi and so you must strive to increase your religious knowledge so that you can act upon your faith and instil Islamic values within your children.

Be righteous. Observe the highest morals. Always speak the truth.

Uphold Islamic principles and strive to be better Muslims every single day of your lives.

Only then can we ensure that our children and the generations who follow are in safe hands and will grow to be a source of pride for our Jama'at.

Always remember that, for both believing men and believing women, it is necessary to keep *Taqwa*(righteousness) at the forefront of your mind, which means to strive towards attaining every form of goodness and virtue.

Thus, endeavour to be the most truthful, the most hard-working and most faithful servants of Islam.

Consider it your lifelong duty to spread the true message of Islam.

May Allah the Almighty enable all of you to live righteous lives and to draw ever closer to your Creator.

According to His command, may you nurture the generation that lies in your laps in a way that ensures that the Jama'at's spiritual, moral and intellectual standards continue to rise and that no Ahmadi child moves away from the teachings of Islam and wastes their life.

May Allah the Almighty enable all of you to act upon the true teachings of Islam and to be shining stars of Ahmadiyyat and to be a continued source of pride for our Jama'at – *Ameen.*"

Address to

Lajna Ima'illah

at the 41st National Ijtema

Lajna Ima'illah UK

delivered on

15th September 2019

After reciting Tashahhud, Ta'awwuz and Surah Al-Fatihah, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} said:

'Today, with the grace of Allah, you are reaching the conclusion of this year's Ijtema.

Alhamdulillah, alongside the continued progress of the Jama'at [Ahmadiyya Muslim Community], Lajna Imaillah UK has taken many steps forward during the past few years. Both in terms of members and in terms of the scope of its activities, Lajna has progressed and Masha'Allah, many beneficial schemes and events have been established in recent years.

Preserve our true Islamic values:

However, as we move towards success and prosperity, it is essential that we intensify our efforts to protect and preserve our true Islamic values and our core identity as Muslims. The only way to achieve this is for us to strive, more than ever before, to act upon the teachings of Islam.

More than ever before, we must endeavour to fulfil the desires and expectations of the Promised Messiah^{as}. He was the one sent by Allah the Almighty to restore the glorious and noble teachings of Islam. He was the one sent to rectify the weaknesses that had gradually corrupted the practical manifestation of the Islamic faith amongst Muslims over the preceding centuries.

In addition to restoring the lost Islamic values within Muslims, he was also sent to convey the message of Islam to the corners

of the earth and to enlighten the people of all faiths and beliefs to the incomparable and universal teachings of the Holy Qur'an. It is for this reason that the Promised Messiah^{as} stated that his era was the era of the propagation of the true teachings of Islam.

We proudly claim to be his followers and so it is our solemn duty to inform others that the adoption of Islam's pure teachings is the means of salvation and true prosperity for the world at large. It is our obligation and our lifelong mission to illustrate through our own lives that Islam's teachings are the means of attaining true peace of mind and contentment within our hearts.

Some people will argue that Islam has already spread globally and query what was or has been the benefit to the world. After all, there are said to be around 1.8 billion Muslims in the world and amongst them are thousands of Islamic scholars who claim to be spreading its teachings. Yet, this has not led to true peace and prosperity within the Muslim Ummah [Muslim community at large], or in the wider world.

The simple and clear reason for this is that, save for those blessed people who have accepted the Promised Messiah^{as}, Muslims across the world are riven within division, dissent and interpret the teachings of Islam in ways that are devoid of sense and often impossible to practice.

The reality is that Allah the Almighty sent the Promised Messiah^{as} to propagate and re-establish the perfect Sharia that had been revealed to the Holy Prophet^{sa}. We are the

fortunate ones who have heard and accepted the call of the Imam of the Age (as) and we have been charged with practicing and preaching all that he taught.

Modern-day technologies:

In order to fulfil this great objective, Allah the Almighty has not left us bereft or ill-equipped; rather, He has created the means for the spread of Islam in this era. In today's world, television, radio, the internet, the print media and social media are just a few ways through which communications have advanced to the point where global communication has become instantaneous.

These are all technologies that we as a Jama'at are utilising to spread the teachings of Islam. However, it is not enough to merely convey the message of Islam to others; rather, our objective can never be fulfilled until each and every one of us become living and practical examples of the benevolent and noble teachings of Islam. This is why the Promised Messiah^{as} repeatedly spoke of the need for the members of his Jama'at to live their lives in accordance with Islamic values and to live and breathe its teachings.

I should also add that we cannot claim to be unique in utilising these modern technologies; rather, worldly people have spared no effort in using the latest means of communication to broadcast programmes and content. Most regrettably and worryingly, much of the content being broadcast or streamed in the world today serves only to weaken the moral and spiritual fabric of society and to take people away from what

is good and decent. They justify such immoral content in the name of freedom, amusement and pleasure.

Thus, where these new technologies have been created as a means for us to serve and spread the holy teachings of Islam, they are also being used by others to immerse the world in depravity and shameful immorality. They are being exploited to lure mankind towards worthless, time-wasting pursuits that are often obscene. It has reached the stage where people in deprived and remote parts of the world can easily view videos produced in the developed world via social media that promote an unchaste and hedonistic lifestyle.

When those people, who are mired in poverty, or held back by the circumstances of their nation, see how people in rich countries are living, it incites frustrations within them. They crave the same levels of opulence and to partake in these artificial and shallow pursuits. As I said, on the one hand, we believe that modern technology has evolved according to the will of Allah to help us in the spread of Islam, yet on the other hand, it is also being used to promulgate vile content utterly devoid of morality and spirituality.

For example, pornography or indecent films are widely available on the internet or broadcast on television. The private relations between men and women have been exposed before the entire world and normalised. This is the reality of the modern world and so, to reverse this moral decline and to promote righteousness and virtue is the great challenge of our time. You, as members of Lajna Imaillah, must rise to this challenge.

Indeed, it is the task of Ahmadi men, women and our youth, as members of the community of the Promised Messiah^{as}, to use modern-day technologies to counter the influence of irreligious and immoral forces and to show that upholding religious values in the contemporary world is not just possible, but is absolutely vital.

First and foremost, we must ourselves avoid the profane and the vulgar. We should view or partake in only those things that encourage piety, strengthen our faith and enable us to gain the pleasure of Allah the Almighty. As people who have accepted the Promised Messiah^{as}, we should absorb those things that increase our knowledge of his teachings, which are, in reality, the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and Holy Prophet^{sa}.

Consequently, we should take benefit of the positive aspects of modern technology, whilst saving ourselves from its damaging and destructive powers. Regrettably, the truth is that many of our Jama'at members, both men and women, are ignoring their duty to spiritually and morally reform themselves despite having taken the Bai'at of the Promised Messiah^{as}.

They are becoming influenced by the materialistic and irreligious forces that darken today's society. They have fallen prey to the poisonous effects of modern technology and are spending far more time absorbing vain and superficial content, than seeking to develop their bond with Allah the Almighty or increasing their spiritual and moral standards.

Every one of us knows how much time we are devoting to watching religious programmes or studying religious texts, in comparison to viewing content that promotes materialism and immorality. In this era, Allah the Almighty has blessed us with MTA [Muslim Television Ahmadiyya International – the official TV station of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community], which has many programmes that increase a person's religious knowledge and so Lajna members must strive to watch it as much possible and to ensure their family members are also benefitting.

Unquestionably, women play an indispensable role in society because the future generations lie in their laps and grow up in their tender care. This fact alone greatly increases the responsibility placed upon Ahmadi women to ensure that they view those programmes or read those books that strengthen their moral fibre and which help them to fulfil the purpose of being part of the community established by the Promised Messiah^{as}.

To clarify, I do not mean that you should never watch any television other than MTA. However, try to watch those programmes that increase your knowledge or are beneficial to your daily lives. Some light entertainment can also be viewed to relax, but you must avoid programmes that promote vulgarity or indecency.

As a side point, MTA is always looking for feedback and suggestions about what type of new programmes can be produced, to increase viewer interest and to further the moral and religious training of the Jama'at. Our Lajna members have

many good ideas and so they should send any comments or feedback they have in this regard.

Purpose of migration:

Moving on, I have mentioned in the past how many members of the Jama'at living in the Western world are those who migrated from Pakistan, or their parents or grandparents migrated here because they were deprived of freedom of religion in their homeland. However, if having attained religious freedom in this country, they are still not practicing their faith, neglect their religious obligations and become consumed by the material pursuits of the modern world, it cannot be said that the purpose of their migration has been fulfilled.

Nor can it be said that they have lived up to their claim of desiring to openly practice their faith as Muslims. Given this, every Ahmadi woman should recognise that they migrated here for the sake of their religion and so they must ensure that their own faith and that of their children remains rock solid. In addition, you should be grateful to the nation that has given you refuge and the way to show true gratitude is to strive to bring the local people towards God Almighty.

Rather than our Jama'at members, in the name of autonomy and prosperity, becoming immersed in the immoral activities and pursuits of today's society, we must steer clear of their ruinous and far-reaching consequences and try to protect others as well. Save yourselves from those sunken paths that

are vacant of spirituality and morality, as they will not only harm you but will also destroy the coming generations.

This does not mean that you cannot integrate or contribute to the society in which you live. Many Ahmadis have grown up here or lived here for decades and are now fully attuned to the British customs and values and are themselves an integral part of this society. There is nothing wrong with this. To the contrary, every person, whether born here or whether they are an immigrant, should strive to integrate and fulfil their duties as a member of society and be a loyal citizen of the nation. **Our faith requires Muslims to utilise their skills and capabilities for the benefit of the nation in which they live and to work towards its progress and development.**

Furthermore, to observe and learn from the local practices and traditions is a good thing, so long as those practices do not clash with the teachings of Islam. Simply put, an Ahmadi should remember that they must not allow themselves to become so engrossed or manipulated by their surroundings, that they forget their basic religious teachings or ignore their duty to train their children according to Islamic teachings.

Certainly, those who fail to protect and preserve their religious values are those who fail to fulfil their pledges. In these developed nations, moral values are declining day by day, in the name of freedom and self-determination. Some of our Ahmadi women and girls are also being negatively affected by this, but they should realise that such so-called freedoms bear no relation to the success and progress of their nation.

Can it be said that going to nightclubs, whilst dressed in a way that exposes almost all of your body and dancing with men, will help a country to develop and succeed? Certainly not!

Can it be said that drinking alcohol and losing one's senses and acting shamelessly is something that will boost your country?

Can this be considered service to one's nation?

Of course not!

These are just a couple of examples and there are many other harmful things that are prevalent in this society, which secular people try to justify in the name of freedom of choice, or progress, but which have been declared as obscene by Allah the Almighty and His messenger (sa) and which take mankind away from its creator. Though such things are championed as examples of a free and modern society, the reality is that such impropriety serves only to shatter the foundations upon which a truly thriving and compassionate society is built.

To debase and lower a society's moral compass, in the name of freedom, is a means of undermining the strength and unity of civilisation at a collective level, as well as individually harming the people within that society. Let it be clear that a time will surely come when the people of these developed countries will realise that what they considered to be freedom was actually the means of their destruction.

Now, we have reached a stage where even some non-Muslims are speaking out to condemn the extreme levels of

immodesty and indecency within their societies and they admit that the lowering of moral standards correlates directly with a rise in frustration and anxiety amongst the general public. As a result, there is absolutely no reason for any of you to bear an inferiority complex or to feel embarrassed upon the practice of your faith.

Worldly people may claim that exposing one's body, dressing suggestively or bringing sexual behaviour into the public arena are signs of a progressive society and one in which freedom of expression is valued. However, they could not be more wrong. All Ahmadi, whether men or women, whether young or old, must understand that from a religious perspective, such behaviour is the height of immorality and cannot be tolerated by religious people, who have pledged to prioritise their faith over all worldly matters.

Therefore, whilst **living in the Western world, it is of vital importance that Ahmadi Muslims guard themselves against the ills of society.** As I said before, you should not just protect yourself, but should strive to save others from moral decay and highlight the importance of virtue and morality. This is how to serve your nation and if you are sincere in this effort, then rest assured, Allah's help and mercy will be with you every step of the way.

True peace of mind:

In today's world, much is spoken about the importance of mental health and mental wellbeing. In this regard, always remember that real peace of mind is attained through the

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True peace of mind:

In today's world, much is spoken about the importance of mental health and mental wellbeing. In this regard, always remember that real peace of mind is attained through the

nearness of Allah the Almighty and not by pursuing the frivolous and futile attractions of the world. This point is made in chapter 13, verse 29 of the Holy Qur'an, where Allah the Almighty has very clearly stated:

"Aye! It is in the remembrance of Allah that hearts can find comfort."

Here, Allah the Almighty has made it categorically clear that for a person to attain a state of peace and comfort, he must remember his Creator. This is not, God forbid, an unsubstantiated claim of the Holy Qur'an. In fact, history has proven it to be true. The lives of all the prophets of God and millions of sincere believers bear testimony to the fact, that true peace of mind is achieved through the remembrance and worship of Allah the Almighty alone.

Hence, do not think that the so-called freedoms of the modern world, or material lifestyles, can inspire peace within a person's heart; rather, it is the remembrance of Allah that inspires a person towards genuine and lasting contentment. The reality is that righteous people feel satisfaction and joy in their hearts whenever they remember Allah the Almighty, reflect on His blessings and the beauty of His creation.

For example, they recognise the glory of Allah, as they pass by trees and forests. They perceive Him as they observe vast oceans and lakes or glorious mountain ranges. Seeing the beauty and perfect harmony of nature leads them to not only praise Allah, but also to reflect upon His majesty and consider

how He created the heavens and the earth and all that encompasses the universe.

Anyway, the main point I wish to make is that Allah the Almighty has stated that true peace of mind cannot be attained through worldly freedom or by partaking in the meaningless attractions of the world; rather, it can only be achieved through the nearness of Allah the Almighty and keeping Him in your heart and mind at all times. Remember, Islam is a religion of moderation and balance. It does not say that we must isolate ourselves or forsake all worldly pursuits. Instead, Allah the Almighty has commanded us to take benefit from and utilise the means of ease and comfort that exist in the world.

There is no harm in pursuing those worldly or recreational activities that are good for our health or linked to our personal interest. However, we should never let them dominate our existence or become our life's purpose. We must never let them distract us from our foremost goal, which should be to remember Allah the Almighty and to seek His nearness. Never, consider worldly pursuits to be the means of salvation or success and certainly, without the grace and mercy of Allah, even seemingly good things can prove dangerous.

For example, salt-water will never quench a person's thirst, but will make him thirstier and if he mindlessly continues to drink it, he will fall ill and eventually die. Consequently, even though water is the means of life, it can, if used improperly, be the source of our demise. We are all aware that when there is rainfall, the ground becomes fertile and lush, but when

drought occurs the land becomes barren and the grass becomes dry. Though we live in a relatively cool country, the summer temperature has been rising in recent years and so, even here, we see how the grass loses its green colour and dries out during hot and dry periods.

In those countries, where the climate is perpetually hot and subject to drought, the grass completely dies away and animals and other living bodies begin to perish. Thus, the value of water is limitless and incomparable and its true value is only noted when we are deprived of it or if it becomes contaminated. In a similar vein, if a person disregards the blessings of God Almighty and pursues sinful behaviour whilst considering that to be his water for life, he will become mired in frustration and despair.

Allah the Almighty has associated the advent of prophets and the teachings they bring as spiritual water for humanity, because through their spiritual water, our souls are cleansed and given sustenance. If we accept what they teach, then our lives are destined for success. Yet, if we reject their teachings or act immorally, we will be rejecting their spiritual water in favour of the worldly salt-water, which will never quench our thirst and will ultimately lead to our destruction.

Never forget, that we Ahmadis are the most fortunate people, as we are the direct recipients of the spiritual water given to the world in this era by the Promised Messiah^{as}. If having accepted him, we continue to walk upon a path of immorality and fail to observe the commands of Allah the Almighty, then we will be destroying our own lives and will be guilty of

choosing salt-water over the spiritual water that could have been our means of salvation and triumph.

Moving on, another thing I wish to mention is that some Ahmadi men and women, including some of our youth, think that the Jama'at places unnecessary constraints on their lives and are denying them their freedoms. However, if they look carefully and fairly, they will realise that the Jama'at is not denying their rightful freedoms in any shape or form; rather, the Jama'at serves only to uphold the teachings of Islam and to morally guide the members of the Jama'at accordingly. We strive to encourage all Ahmadis to act upon the true teachings of their religion, which are the means of true freedom and liberation.

Regrettably, there have been cases of a few young Ahmadi men or women, who became so influenced by the wider society, that they left their homes and abandoned their faith. For some time, they may have considered themselves to be free or to have attained the liberties and fun that they sought. Yet, later on, many came to regret their decision and expressed their embarrassment and shame at having left the Jama'at and sought to re-enter its fold. They admitted that what they thought would be a life of freedom had proven to be the opposite and soon realised they had embarked upon a destructive and dangerous path.

Always remember that basic wisdom and intelligence requires and indeed, it is the teaching of God Almighty, that a person investigates and researches carefully the pros and cons before taking any step or life decision.

We, who call ourselves Ahmadi Muslims and claim to have accepted the Promised Messiah^{as}, must not only weigh up the materialistic pros and cons, but should also assess the spiritual and religious benefit or harm before making a decision or adopting a new path. No matter the extent of the material benefits, a true Ahmadi should always be ready to give up such things, if they do not correspond to their religious teachings.

Priority should always be given to our spiritual and religious values. After all, we proclaim and pledge that we are the people, who will forever give precedence to our religion over all worldly matters.

Before ending, I also wish to remind you that the **Holy Prophet^{sa} said that modesty is an integral part of our faith.** Thus, whilst living in the West, Ahmadi women should not follow those fashions and trends that are justified in the name of freedom of choice, but are in reality a means of immorality and immodesty. You should not adopt those fashion trends, which expose your body, rather than preserving your modesty. At all times, Ahmadi women and girls should follow those fashions that are within the confines of modesty and through which their chastity is preserved.

It should be clear that every Ahmadi woman and girl dresses and acts in a respectable way and according to the principles of modesty. Sometimes, some Ahmadi women or girls fail to cover their heads, their hair or even their chest for the sake of fashion and this is completely contrary to the requirements of their faith.

Furthermore, some ladies wear coats in the name of pardah, but their coats are so fitted that they resemble a skin-tight shirt. Such **coats that expose a person's physical attributes are not appropriate for Muslim women or girls.** The coats you wear should cover your bodies and your scarves should be worn properly over your heads.

Always be conscious of your dress so that no one can ever question your modesty and be proud of the fact that pardah is the means of guarding the honour and chastity of a Muslim woman. Every Ahmadi man and woman has a circle within which they are duty-bound to remain and that circle is simply whatever Islam teaches. Hence, our limits are not decreed by any individual, rather they have been decreed by Allah the Almighty.

Some people think that Ahmadiyyat is stricter than Islam, but this is wrong because Ahmadiyyat and Islam are one and the same thing. The standard of pardah required by Islam has been very clearly stipulated in the Holy Qur'an and so you should read the Qur'an carefully to see what the required standards of modesty are.

In every respect, we must follow the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and consider it our guiding light.

We must observe the standards of worship stipulated in the Holy Qur'an.

We must act upon the methods of remembrance of Allah that have been given in the Holy Qur'an.

We must adopt every Qur'anic instruction to the best of our abilities.

Then we will attain the rewards and nearness of Allah the Almighty and we will fulfil the rights of our Bai'at of the Promised Messiah^{as}.

Otherwise, our claim of giving priority to our faith over all worldly matters and being ready for all sacrifices for its sake, will be devoid of truth and rendered hollow and meaningless.

May Allah the Almighty enable all of you to act upon the true teachings of Islam, to understand and realise that the true purpose of your lives is to attain the pleasure of Allah the Almighty and to be ready for all sacrifices in its cause – *Ameen*.

May Allah the Almighty continue to bless Lajna Imaillah in all respects.'

Address to
Lajna Ima'illah
at the National Ijtema
Lajna Ima'illah UK
delivered on
26th September 2021

After reciting Tashahhud, Ta'awwuz and Surah al-Fatihah Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} said:

'Alhamdulillah [all praise belongs to God], after two years, Lajna Ima'illah UK has once again had the opportunity to hold its National Ijtema. As every Ahmadi knows, the primary purpose of our jalsas and ijtemas is to better the spiritual and moral standards of the participants, to increase their religious knowledge and strengthen their faith. If these are not the objectives, there is no point in holding ijtemas and similar events.

The rapid advance of communication:

In today's world, human knowledge and understanding has rapidly progressed in all secular fields, and, as a result, communication is now extremely advanced and easy in comparison to previous eras. Distances have eroded through modern means of travel and through various means of electronic and digital communication, such as the telephone, radio, television and the internet. This technological revolution that has taken place would not have seemed plausible even half a century ago. Indeed, the rapid advance of communication, through the development of the smartphone and other smart technologies, could not have been envisaged even ten or fifteen years ago. The entire world has become inextricably linked in a way that has never been seen before in the history of mankind. For instance, it is now possible to see and talk to people living in the far corners of the world, thousands of miles away, in the blink of an eye.

Technological advancement has also enabled people to exhibit and promote their beliefs, values and culture to people across the world. It has enabled those people living in rich, developed nations to showcase their way of living to people living thousands of miles away, in remote villages and towns in the developing world. It has enabled Western countries to promote and export the freedoms and values they proudly espouse as their culture, to the extent that even the poorest and most underprivileged people in the world are now well-versed in how people in rich countries live. When they, who are living the most impoverished of lives, see the precipitous development and the luxuries afforded to those living in other parts of the world, it naturally leads to feelings of restlessness and grief at their own desperate plight. Therefore, where satellite technology and the internet has turned the world into a global village, it cannot be said that it has only proven a force for good.

At a time when mankind considers itself more civilised and developed than ever before, the reality is that the majority of people in the world are continuing to live at the base poverty level or even below it. Adding petrol to the fire of their torment is the fact that they are now constantly exposed to images of the affluent lifestyles and immense purchasing power of people in developed countries, whilst buying even the most basic essentials for their families remains a daily struggle for them. **Thus, instead of bridging the gaps that exist in society, modern technology has served only to shine a glaring light on the inequalities and injustices that exist.** In turn, this has naturally fermented feelings of anguish, anxiety

and discontent amongst those who are forced to endure great adversity.

So, where on the one hand, rich governments and their people reassure themselves that satellite television and the internet is providing people living in poor countries with entertainment, the reality is that the technology has served to drive an even greater wedge between the haves and have nots. Whilst many living in the developed world may prefer to turn a blind eye to this inequality, they should realise that there is also a grave crisis taking place here on their doorsteps and its potential ramifications are no less destructive.

We are living in a time of ever-rising materialism and worldliness where, despite being intelligent, and despite having eyes to see with, most people are living a life of spiritual and moral blindness, in which they consider anything that shimmers or glistens to be made of gold. They fail to realise how superficial they have become and remain ignorant of the far-reaching consequences and harm caused by rampant materialism. **I am sure there will come a time when they will recognise that constant exposure to material things on TV, on the internet and on social media, and the pursuit of vain desires has been to their profound detriment.** They will see how all that they have considered as good and progressive has actually triggered a spiritual and moral malice, the like of which perhaps the world has never seen before. They will be forced to admit that the riches of the world have left them spiritually penniless and morally bankrupt. Although we are seeing evidence of this, as increasingly, people are suffering from anxiety, depression and other mental health issues on a far greater scale than ever before; it is my firm

belief that the root cause of this is that they have been trapped by their materialistic pursuits and cravings, and above all, because they have abandoned faith in God Almighty.

We are living in a world where no matter how rich someone is, they always want more. Instead of being grateful for what they have, they are preoccupied with what they do not. Where men have been corrupted by an extreme desire for wealth, women are also certainly involved in this unholy race. These vain pursuits serve only to increase frustration and anxiety and are leading mankind towards darkness, rather than enlightenment. If people living in the underdeveloped world are being adversely affected by what they see on TV or the internet, we can only imagine how much harm is being inflicted on people living here at the very epicentre of materialism, greed and consumer culture.

In the past, I have advised Ahmadi parents that they should be mindful of what they and their children view on television and should make sure they limit the amount of time they spend watching it. However, the world has now moved far beyond just the risk of seeing inappropriate content on television; rather, children are being exposed to masses of content on the internet, on YouTube and on various social media platforms. Children are viewing content on their phones, laptops and tablets, often hidden from their parents' view, and they themselves are not in control of what they are seeing. For example, if they are streaming a video or playing an online game, pop-up adverts will frequently appear, often promoting harmful products or showing lewd content, that is morally destructive and not age appropriate at all. It is an extremely harrowing state of affairs.

There have been reports of children viewing inappropriate content which they can instantly divert to a child-friendly programme when an adult enters, so the adults are left none the wiser. It is for these very reasons that I have repeatedly warned about the dangers of the internet and social media.

I have been saying for years that anyone using Facebook, Twitter or other similar platforms must exercise a great deal of caution, and since then, many studies and investigations have proven the grievous harm being inflicted upon children and society by social media. They have shown that hundreds of thousands, if not millions of children globally, have suffered serious harm through their use of the internet and social media. **It is common knowledge that these platforms are constructed in a way that makes them addictive and just like any addiction, the results are often horrific.** For example, very recently, a report by the *Wall Street Journal* found that Instagram, which is owned by Facebook, tried to cover up its own internal study because it proved that access to its platform was causing huge levels of anxiety and other dangerous mental health issues, amongst children and teenagers. It found that amongst those children in the UK who had suicidal thoughts, 13% admitted that it was their use of Instagram that had driven them to consider taking their own life.

Now, other people and prominent organisations have finally started to wake up to the dangers of social media. For example, in response to the report I just mentioned, the 5Rights Foundation, which campaigned for reform of social media stated, "Facebook's own research is a devastating indictment of the carelessness with which it and the technical

sector more broadly treats children. In pursuit of profit, these companies are stealing children's time, self-esteem and mental health, and sometimes tragically, their lives."

Thus, Ahmadi parents should closely monitor what their children are viewing and guide them about what is, and is not, appropriate, so that their children are not, God forbid, included in the horrifying statistics of lives that are being lost or ruined due to social media.

Never forget your roots and your true objectives:

Moving on, I also wish to remind all of you that, even whilst living in the comfort of the West, you must never forget your roots and your true objectives. Certainly, most Ahmadis living in the Western world, especially those who originate from Pakistan, came here to escape religious persecution. Irrespective of their place in society, whether working as businessmen, professionals, labourers, or if they are in education, Ahmadis in Pakistan continue to be the victims of grave persecution and injustice. Even very small Ahmadi children, in year one or two, are being harassed by other children or their teachers, and this is having a damaging effect on them. In terms of higher education, certain professors and members of faculty at Pakistani universities are filled with venomous anti-Ahmadi prejudice and bigotry.

Thus, where there is an ever-present fear of physical terrorist and extremist attacks targeting Ahmadis in Pakistan, at the same time, there is a constant stream of physiological terrorism and extremism that is being waged against our members. As a result, many Ahmadis have been forced to

leave Pakistan and seek a better future abroad. Often, their journeys are arduous and involve dangerous travel which they endure in the hope of eventually living a normal and peaceful life. Indeed, many Ahmadis are stranded in extremely inhospitable conditions for years on end, but they endure the extremely tough conditions in the hope of finding a better life for their children in which they are free to openly practice their religion.

Accordingly, all Ahmadis living in the comfort of the West should recognise their good fortune and realise that a great religious responsibility lies upon their shoulders. The very reason for your coming here, or your parents or grandparents, was so you would be able to practice your religion freely. And so it is incumbent upon you to strive to fulfil this objective rather than becoming immersed in the material ways of Western nations. Appreciate all the opportunities you have here. For example, Ahmadi girls in the UK are studying in very good schools, colleges and universities, and have the opportunity to advance and progress. All the while, Ahmadi girls in Pakistan are either denied such opportunities or face daily discrimination and intimidation whilst in education.

So, remember why you have this chance and never forget who you are; rather, **take pride in your faith and religion.** Where you strive to excel in your studies, you must also remember that your faith should take precedence over all worldly and material matters. If your priorities are in order, you will live your lives in a way to be proud of, and you will also prove to be of benefit to this country. Strive to be good citizens, and to achieve this, you must utilise your capabilities, faculties and

skills for the benefit of others and play your role in building a better and more harmonious society.

Moral standards and values:

You should seek to integrate, but as I have said in the past, integrating and contributing to your country does not require you to violate your moral compass and forsake your religious values; rather, the way to successfully integrate into Western nations is to contribute to the success of the nation whilst maintaining your religious identity. Indeed, this should be the hallmark and distinguishing feature of Ahmadi Muslims living in the West. Sacrificing your moral standards and values is not going to help your country in any way. Going to nightclubs where men and women mix and dance whilst in a state of undress is not going to benefit this country. Going to pubs and bars so you can get drunk and lose all your inhibition and senses is not service to the nation. There are many other immoral activities and harmful vices prevalent that are considered part of what makes this a so-called free society.

Yet, let it be clear that engaging in such vices and immoral behaviour does not make you free nor does it raise the station and status of your nation. On the contrary, such activities take a person far away from God Almighty. And so, instead of benefiting humanity, immoral behaviour serves only to hurt the country and weaken the moral fabric of society. Hence, all Ahmadis, men, women and children, must understand that the way to serve their nation and to be loyal to it is by upholding the highest moral standards and acting upon the teachings of Islam by fulfilling the rights of God Almighty and His creation.

The tragic reality is that those who consider themselves the most civilised and progressive people of the modern world fail to understand the immense harm and far-reaching consequences of the immodesty and vulgarity that pervades today's society. God knows better when, but one day, they will surely realise the error of their ways and will admit the liberalism has gone too far, but by then, it will be extremely difficult for them to establish higher morals in society. Thus, it is the duty of all Ahmadi Muslims to ensure that they stand up for what is right and to have the courage of their convictions.

If we are successful in achieving this, then, when others come to realise their mistakes, we will be ready to guide them and to present them with an alternative and better system of morals. Certainly, I hope and pray that our Jama'at [community] will be there to protect society and to arrest moral decline before it reaches the point of no return. So, as Ahmadis living in the West, if you truly want to contribute to society and wish to manifest genuine gratitude to this country for letting you live here with freedom of religion and for granting you opportunities to progress, the best way is to give priority to your faith over all worldly matters. True gratitude requires you to fulfil both the rights of God and mankind and save yourselves from all forms of vulgar and immoral behaviour that takes a person away from his faith. Where prioritising your faith will be your personal means of salvation, it will, *Insha'Allah* [God willing], ensure that you have played your role in saving your nation from its moral decline.

Certainly, we are passing through a time in which long-standing traditions and values are being eroded piece by piece, and these changes are being forced on society in the

name of freedom. Instead of strengthening society, such changes are triggering anxiety and confusion amongst large segments of the population. Indeed, **some good-natured people have started to speak out and question the directions of travel of society and ask why traditional moral values and standards are being discarded.** Similarly, some fair-minded journalists and public figures have started to write columns focusing upon the moral decay in society and how quickly values are changing, not for the better, but for the worst.

The reality is that good-natured and decent people, irrespective of their beliefs or religion, cannot tolerate a society that plummets to such an extent that it is sometimes difficult to differentiate between the acts and morals of humans and those of animals. So, as Ahmadi Muslims living here in the West, it is our paramount responsibility to protect our morals and to strive to ensure that the society in which we live upholds the highest moral standards and respective human values. Furthermore, it is our duty and obligation as members of the Jama'at of the Promised Messiah^{as} to convey the message of true Islam to others, and it is my firm belief and conviction that if we hold aloft the lantern of spiritual light entrusted to us by the Promised Messiah^{as}, we will find that the help of Allah the Almighty will be with us every step of the way, *Insha'Allah*. Only then will we be in a position to show the world the difference between those who worship the One and Everlasting God and act upon His commands and those whose only god is worldly attractions. Only then can we inform others about the true purpose of our creation, to worship God Almighty and to seek His nearness. Only when we are constantly seeking to elevate our religious and spiritual

standards can we guide others and show the world that we are those who have achieved true peace of mind and contentment by firmly adhering to our religious beliefs and values.

True contentment and inner peace:

Certainly, the glitz and glamour of the world can never provide true and lasting contentment, no matter how attractive it appears at first sight. In chapter 13, verse 29, of the Holy Qur'an, Allah the Almighty says:

أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطَّبِئُ الْقُلُوبُ

"Aye, it is in the remembrance of Allah that hearts can find comfort."

As we ponder over this verse, we know that it is not just a claim of the Holy Qur'an; rather, the lived experience of the righteous and God-fearing members of our community testifies to the fact that true contentment and inner peace is attained through the worship and remembrance of Allah and not through worthless forms of recreation or superficial means of entertainment. Here, I shall clarify that there are some very good and beneficial forms of recreation that should be pursued. For example, regular exercise and physical activity are very important for a person's physical and mental health. However, those forms of recreation or games that place a barrier between a person and God Almighty and which increase a person's lust for material things must be avoided.

Such activities are neither good for your health nor your spirituality, and instead, increase a person's anxieties.

Indeed, superficial and ostentatious pursuits are akin to salty seawater, which, instead of quenching one's thirst, serves only to increase it. A person lacking intelligence and wisdom will keep drinking from the cup of saltwater expecting that it will eventually satiate his thirst. Needless to say, it can never quench a person's thirst; rather, it will slowly poison him and ultimately cause his death. That salty water can never be life-giving; rather, it is the means of taking away one's life. Alternatively, the best water is that which comes down from the heavens in the shape of rain and which is the means of our life and existence. That fresh water gives life to the soil beneath us and is the means of sustaining all forms of life. So, it is up to us to save ourselves from the toxic glamour of the world that is just like the salt water that hides its poison. Instead, we should seek to immerse ourselves in that spiritual water that is life-giving and which purifies our soul. It is that sweet water that will sustain us and grant us peace of mind and it can only be attained through the nearness of Allah and by following His commands.

So, all Ahmadis living in the Western world should reflect upon their priorities and consider whether some of the so-called freedoms that are afforded here are truly what they seem or are they bitter pills coated in sugar. Certainly, those freedoms that encourage vice, immodesty and deception can lead to nothing good; rather, they cause only anxiety, suffering and the breakdown of families and communities.

Faith and beliefs:

Some of our members, particularly those who are younger, express their opinion that any restrictions or limits placed by the Jama'at are a means of curtailing their freedoms. Yet, if they carefully analyse whatever limits are prescribed by the Jama'at, they will realise they are all entirely based upon true Islamic principles that do not diminish a person's rights, but to the contrary, firmly entrench them and are the means of true freedom and liberation.

There have been cases of a few Ahmadi youths, both male and female, who were extremely influenced by western society and so chose to discard their faith and beliefs. However, they came to regret their decision. They admit that they had, in the name of freedom, fallen blindly into a spiritual abyss. They express their sorrow and embarrassment, and some eventually return to the Jama'at. Remember, a wise person always evaluates the benefits and harms before undertaking any action or reaching a decision. Moreover, a true *Mo'min* or *Mo'minah*, a true believer, is he or she who acts with wisdom and calculates not only the practical consequences of any action, but who focuses principally upon the religious benefits or harms. A believer ensures that any action he takes is according to Islam's teachings and within its prescribed limits.

So, returning to the television, the internet and social media that I mentioned earlier; if you wish to save yourselves and your families from their negative effects, you must act with wisdom. **View content that increases your knowledge and understanding of the world and Allah's creation.** When you have free time, you can watch lighter content or comedies,

but choose those programmes that are decent. Above all, do not view content that takes you away from God, as then, instead of bringing others towards Allah, you yourself will move away from Him.

Dignity and modesty:

Similarly, **Ahmadi women and girls should always remember that in the name of fashion or following the latest trends, they should not sacrifice their modesty.** Some Lajna members say they have covered part of their heads and consider that enough. Similarly, some ladies wear overcoats in the name of observing *pardah* but with sleeves rolled all the way up their arms. Yet, Allah the Almighty has already stated that *hijab* requires a woman to fully cover her hair in public and wear loose-fitting garments and ensure that her collar and chest area is not exposed. So, Ahmadi women should pay careful attention to protecting their modesty and chastity. Failing to do so is to violate the commands of Allah and those limits established by Islam for the sake of protecting the dignity and virtue of Muslim women.

Keep in mind that any limits placed upon you by Islam are a means of guarding your honour and protecting you from the everyday risks that exist in society, where women are constantly harassed, abused and exploited. In terms of your education, you should seek to excel and be the very best you can be, but at the same time, avoid inappropriate and unnecessary contact with boys and men on social media or otherwise. It has been witnessed how such improper relationships lead to great harm. Use your education and

other opportunities to better yourself, but never let these freedoms become a curse for you and others.

Most regrettably, there have been cases where Ahmadi men and women have not observed the appropriate limits, and it has caused the breakdown of homes and families. Whereas free mixing is a normal part of society here, Ahmadi Muslim men and women must live according to the morals taught by Islam. Be mindful of protecting your honour, and that of your family, and community by acting with dignity and modesty. Appreciate the fact that your honour and that of your husband and family is a prized possession that you must always safeguard.

Some women write that they or their daughters consider *pardah* to be a state of one's heart and so query the need for actual, physical modesty in their clothing. This is entirely wrong and the result of satanic societal influences that seek to take a person away from God. What I am saying is not based on Pakistani or Asian culture, rather these are the universal teachings of Islam applicable to all Muslims, regardless of where they hail from. Thus, irrespective of whether she is from Pakistan, Asia, the UK, Europe, America, Africa or any other part of the world, an Ahmadi Muslim woman should live according to Islamic teachings and protect and value her modesty at all times. Most Ahmadi women living here either came from Pakistan themselves or their elders migrated from there, and so they must not abandon those religious principles which they or their elders were raised with; rather, you should set an example of modesty for others to learn from and demonstrate your power, confidence and self-worth through the manifestation of faith. Certainly, if you have self-

confidence and are free from all complexes about your religion, it will cast wide open the doors to *tabligh* [preaching and propagation] and the spread of Islam in this part of the world, *Insha'Allah*.

Revolutionary spiritual and moral change:

It is important to mention that some English or European women have accepted Islam and become exemplary members of our Jama'at. They have brought about a revolutionary spiritual and moral change in their life and have established such high standards of modest dress that one is left amazed by them. This is something for the other Ahmadi women and girls to ponder over. If these English or European ladies who grew up in this society and in non-Muslim homes have reached the conclusion that the way to establish their dignity and honour is through modest dress and virtuous conduct, then what of those Ahmadi Muslim women and girls who originate from Muslim countries and who grow up in Muslim homes? Without a shadow of doubt, our Jama'at is destined to move forward and to progress, *Insha'Allah*. However, if you do not protect your faith and live up to the expectations and teachings of the Promised Messiah^{as}, then people from other nations will join our community and will become the standard bearers for Islam in this era. They will be the ones to propagate its teachings, whilst those who come before will be left behind. As you have all accepted the Promised Messiah^{as} and taken his *Bai'at* [pledge of allegiance to enter the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community], you must strive to honour your pledge of *Bai'at* and ensure that worldly influences never take you away from it.

I pray that may Allah grant all of you the ability to act upon all that I have said and may the members of Lajna Ima'illah truly become those who free themselves from sin and fulfil the rights of worship of Allah. I pray that you never become immersed in vain and material pursuits that take you away from the oath of allegiance you have made to the Promised Messiah^{as}.

Finally, always remember that you must not only shield yourselves and your children, but you must also play a great and prominent role in conveying the message of Islam throughout the world. It should be your lifelong objective to win the hearts and minds of humanity so that one day, *Insha'Allah*, the people of the world will all join as one under the banner of the Holy Prophet^{sa}. This is the great task given to the Jama'at of the Promised Messiah^{as} by Allah the Almighty and it is the foremost duty of Ahmadi men and women to serve wholeheartedly in this cause. If you want to rise to this challenge and to bring about a spiritual revolution in the world, we must first start by reforming ourselves. So, strive to increase your religious knowledge and endeavour to build your relationship with Allah. Bow down before Him and pray He guides you to the right path, so that you are counted amongst those who fulfil His commands.

Never forget that Allah the Almighty has knowledge of both the seen and the unseen, and knows all that we do. So, even when there is no one else present to see or judge you, remember that Allah is watching over you, and for His sake alone, you must act upon His commands, protect your faith and fulfil your duties of nurturing the next generation in the best way. It is up to us to bring about a moral and spiritual

revolution in the world, and so, train your children so that they grow to be ready to take up the mantle of serving the mission of the Promised Messiah^{as}.

May Allah enable all of you to fulfil your duties in the best way and may you all prove to be shining stars of Ahmadiyyat. May Allah the Almighty continue to bless Lajna Ima'illah in all respects.'

Address to
Lajna Ima'illah
at the National Ijtema
Lajna Ima'illah UK
delivered on
18th September 2022

After reciting *Tashahhud*, *Ta'awwuz* and *Bismillah*, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} said:

‘With the grace of Allah, after the last few Covid-affected years, Lajna Ima’illah UK has once again had the opportunity to hold its national ijtema on a larger scale and I hope and pray you will have greatly benefited from the programmes. Lajna Ima’illah members should always ponder over and reflect upon the objectives of their auxiliary organisation and what it means to be part of Lajna Ima’illah. When Hazrat Musleh Maud^{ra} established Lajna Ima’illah, he named it following great deliberation and thought, as “Lajna Ima’illah” literally means a community of the servants of Allah the Almighty. So, **when you have entered the community of the servants of Allah the Almighty and pledged to be servants of your faith, you must understand your responsibilities.**

A true believer:

First and foremost, all members must pay close attention to protecting their faith. They must strive to reach the spiritual level and height required of a true believer. In the Holy Qur’an, addressing the unlettered desert-dwelling Arabs of the time, Allah the Almighty said, “Say you have not believed yet, but rather say, we have accepted Islam.” Here, Allah the Almighty commands that whilst those rural people should say they have accepted Islam and become Muslim, they should not claim to have believed or to have gained true faith. This is because the standard of faith required of a sincere believer far exceeds mere acceptance of Islam. Anyone who recites the *kalimah* [Islamic creed] can say that “I am a Muslim”, but not everyone can say they are a believer or have acquired true faith.

Proclaiming that Allah the Almighty is the One and Omnipotent God, the Holy Prophet^{sa} is His Messenger and Islam is a perfect religion, represents only the most basic level of belief. Absolute faith requires a far higher level of belief and understanding, and one cannot reach that level until and unless they act upon all of the commands of Allah the Almighty.

So, the first thing that every Ahmadi must remember is that they must strive to become complete in their faith and belief.

Regarding this, the Promised Messiah^{as} said, "Believers are those whose acts and deeds testify to their faith. Upon their hearts their faith is engraved. Believers are those who give precedence to their Lord and attaining His pleasure above all else." So, giving precedence to one's faith over everything else is paramount and fundamental to attaining the status of a believer. Remember, giving precedence to one's faith is a pledge that every Ahmadi makes when they take the *bai'at* [pledge of allegiance]. And it is also a core tenet of the respective pledges of each of the auxiliary organisations.

The Promised Messiah^{as} further states: "Believers tread steadfastly upon the narrow and difficult path of righteousness for the sake of God and they become immersed in His love." True believers do not follow the path but rather remain firmly on the path of righteousness, no matter what worldly pressures or challenges they face. They consider Allah the Almighty to be everything and their entire existence and life's purpose is to attain His pleasure. Whatever personal relationships or worldly desires they have fail in comparison to their love for God. People make great efforts to care for their loved ones or to fulfil their own worldly needs. But if

those relationships or needs become their priority, then according to the Promised Messiah^{as}, such people cannot be sincere in their faith. The Promised Messiah^{as} further states: **"And true believers are those who stay far away from all those things that, like false idols, are an obstacle in the way of God, be it moral failings, evil deeds, or negligence and laziness."**

We live in a society and time where at every turn, there are temptations that lead a person towards sin or to act in a way that incurs the displeasure of Allah. Indeed, often people do not even realise their conduct is wrong. For example, some people do not keep good relationships with their neighbours and fail to fulfil their rights. Further, mocking or taunting someone is entirely wrong. Another social wrong occasionally observed at ijtemas or gatherings is that ladies ensure there is a good place for them and their children to sit, but if another child comes towards them, they usher them away or express irritation. It has also been observed that a mother offers her child a snack but does not offer anything to the other children sitting nearby. Rather than setting a positive example of sharing to her child, the mother leaves the other children empty-handed. Such behaviour is the height of bad manners and always remember, if you fail to show kindness to others, your children will learn the same. Conversely, **if you are kind and considerate your children will naturally observe and learn from you**, and you will be doing their *tarbiyyat*] moral training] through your manners and etiquettes.

Complete obedience to Allah the Almighty:

In the Qur'anic verse just mentioned, Allah proclaims: "Say you have not believed yet, but rather say we have accepted Islam." This means that true belief does not exist until there is complete obedience to Allah the Almighty. In terms of our Jama'at, complete obedience to Allah the Almighty also requires an Ahmadi Muslim to be respectful of the organisational structure of our Jama'at, referred to as the '*Nizam-e-Jama'at*'. Remember, our Jama'at's *nizam*] structure] has been established and created by the Khalifah of the time and through the *nizam*, the works and schemes of the various national Jama'ats and the auxiliary organisations occur with his permission and approval. If a Jama'at office bearer is not serving properly, or his conduct is a matter of concern, it should be reported to one of his senior officers or supervisors. However, to sit in a gathering, whether public or private, speaking against the office bearer or complaining about the Jama'at, or aggressively confronting the person you have an issue with is wrong and contrary to the spirit of our Jama'at. Such behaviour cannot lead anywhere good. Instead, grudges will ferment and eventually the faith of the complainant will weaken.

It has been observed that if, at the local level, Ahmadis fail to listen to their local Jama'at office bearers, or those assigned some level of responsibility, it leads to further descent. Eventually, such people start raising questions or complaints against Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyya [the Ahmadiyya Caliphate] and they fail to heed the guidance and instructions of the Khalifah of the time. Ultimately, some people become distant from

their religion and lose faith. Certainly, a genuine grievance or concern should not be ignored or swept under the carpet. However, rather than starting an argument or creating division within the Jama'at, take the matter to a higher level and seek to resolve the issue fairly and appropriately.

Moving on, you should all be aware that the worship of Allah is fundamental to true belief and faith. *Nizam* is the cornerstone of reforming an individual, whilst at the same time it serves to unify and strengthen the collective bond amongst Muslims. Though it is not obligatory for women to worship in the mosque, whenever they join together for Eid prayers, ijtemas or any other occasion, they should ensure that as Allah the Almighty has commanded the rows for prayer remain straight. Further, when it comes to Jalsa, ijtema, or other Lajna programmes, the objectives and dignity of the event can only be maintained if those attending pay full attention and have a sincere intention to act upon all the good things they learn. If we cannot even keep straight lines during *namaz* [daily prayers] or if we walk during the speeches at Jalsa or ijtema, and ignore the request of those on duty to remain silent or argue with them, it is reflective of something much deeper and of grave concern. Slowly but surely, such behaviour progresses until a person moves away from their faith.

In a worldly sense, people have a heartfelt and burning desire to listen to, and please, their most beloved people. Indeed, that love often inspires them to love the people near and close to their beloved. Yet, those human ties bear no comparison to the love we owe to Allah the Almighty and His Messenger^{sa}.

As I have said repeatedly, to love Allah and His Prophet^{sa} requires that we strive to act upon their commands.

Develop a purely Islamic atmosphere:

Today's society has become morally corrupted and spiritually decayed, as the harmful effects of the mainstream media and social media continue to drive people away from religion and belief in God. Even in schools, very young children are being taught inappropriately, and immoral things which they are far too young to comprehend. As a result, children from a very young age are being conditioned by their schools and the wider society into a secular way of thinking and away from religious values and teachings. In such conditions, the onus is very much upon parents to ensure the moral training of their children. These days even children's cartoons or computer games include storylines or characters that are wholly inappropriate and take away children's innocence. Children themselves should also be very much careful and vigilant on seeing their cartoons and parents should definitely supervise while children are viewing, seeing and watching cartoons.

The long-term consequences of such exposure are extremely dangerous and can easily take our future generations away from religion and away from moral values. Thus, parents must keep a close eye on what their children are exposed to. And to counter the outside influences, Ahmadi parents must develop a purely Islamic atmosphere within their homes where the commands of Allah are acted upon, and the best morals are displayed. Remember, children are intelligent and highly observant, so there should not be any discrepancy between what you teach them and your conduct and

character. Certainly, if Ahmadi parents fail to instil Islamic values and teachings within themselves, their children will grow up to be heavily influenced by the materialism and godlessness of today's society. Accordingly, it is vital that Ahmadi parents very carefully strive to better themselves so that they can properly train and guide their children.

As I have already said, if any of the Jama'at office bearers have caused you offence or acted in a way you did not think was right, strive to resolve the matter calmly by speaking directly to the person or his superior. If you are still unsatisfied with the outcome, write to the Khalifah of the time. However, never discuss such issues in front of your children, otherwise it will have a very harmful effect on them. Ultimately, it will develop a hatred of religions within them, and they will become susceptible to the superficial glamour of worldly things and come under the wrong influence of society. Talk to your children every day and tell them those things that will bring them closer to Allah the Almighty and His Prophet^{sa}. As I have said many times before, **it is essential that Ahmadi parents develop a genuine friendship and mutual trust with their children from the very beginning.** Whilst this is the duty of both parents, it is especially incumbent on Ahmadi mothers to forge a loving and close bond with their children and to instil religious values within them. You should encourage your children to talk to you freely and openly. Children are naturally curious, and it is the duty of mothers to answer their questions. If the mother does not know the answer you should search for it, rather than leave it unanswered. In this regard, Ahmadi girls and women must seek to increase their religious knowledge and be aware of contemporary issues. If

you increase your knowledge, it will also serve to increase your faith. Strive to develop an interest of religion in your children. Explain to them why religion is important and to be valued above all else. Ensuring your children's moral and spiritual training is a huge task and the foremost challenge for Ahmadis who have children growing up in today's society and mothers have the main role to play in this effort.

Quite often, the examples of righteous people are narrated in our Jama'at programmes; they are not presented just as stories from the past to entertain us. Rather, the pious examples of our predecessors should guide and inspire us and our children to take up the mantle of being devoted servants of our faith. We learn from them what qualities and virtues Muslims should adopt so we can join the ranks of true believers. For example, a believer is she who remains truthful in all circumstances. When it comes to speaking the truth, people often convince themselves there is nothing wrong with the occasional untruth, or a so-called white lie. However, any untruth, no matter how big or small, is a major wrong and a sin.

Moral standards:

Many of us are aware of the well-known *hadith* [saying of the Holy Prophet^{sa}] in which an individual who possessed many weaknesses and vices came to the Holy Prophet^{sa} and asked him which one evil he should abstain from, as he did not think it possible for him to leave all his vices. In reply, the Holy Prophet^{sa} instructed he should abandon falsehood. The individual was pleased by the Holy Prophet's^{sa} response and thought it would be easy for him to stop lying whilst

continuing with his other vices. However, it later inspired that whenever he thought of doing something immoral or sinful, he stopped himself and thought that if he were caught, he would have no choice but to admit his offence because of the pledge he had made to the Holy Prophet^{sa}. As a result, overtime he became free of all the evils and vices he was previously affected with. He could easily have continued to lie; however, once he had made a pledge to the Holy Prophet^{sa}, he was determined and committed to fulfilling it and eventually joined the ranks of the righteous and reached the proper standard of a believer.

All of you attending the Lajna ijtema has also made a pledge to your faith, and you must strive earnestly to fulfil it. Regrettably, personal or domestic issues are often brought to my attention concerning disputes amongst Ahmadis. It is not the case that only Punjabi or Urdu-speaking ladies write to me about such matters; ladies raised and educated in the West also write to complain about the behaviour of their in-laws or their family members. They sometimes also include the *Nizam-e-Jamaat* in their complaint by writing that an office bearer is closely allied with their relatives and so is not impartial. Often, when these cases are carefully investigated, it is found that there is a degree of exaggeration or falsehood on both sides. If both parties in such matters were to act upon the truth, the dispute would be resolved in a far less fractious way. Similarly, it would make it much easier for Jama'at office bearers or *Dar al-Qadha* [department of justice] to make the correct decision. Difficulties arise where people depart from the truth and embellish the fact to make the case more favourable to them irrespective of what is right or fair.

Remember, there can never be blessings in falsehood as Allah the Almighty knows the truth. Hence, I reiterate that falsehood is a sin of the highest order which can quickly destroy the peace and happiness of families and cause grave damage to your community.

Regarding the harmful effects of falsehood in lying, I shall give another example. Sometimes an office bearer may visit the home of an Ahmadi unexpectedly. The first point is that office bearers should try to be mindful of the convenience and personal circumstances of the Jama'at members. We should not cause unnecessary difficulty and so should visit at a convenient time. However, if it will happen that an office bearer visits at an inconvenient time, the Ahmadi must not resort to falsehood. Sadly, there have been occasions where a child has informed their mother that the Jama'at guest is at the door and the mother has instructed her child to say she is not at home. Of course, the child's natural instinct is to wonder why their mother is asking them to lie. Though, certain inappropriate things are taught to children in schools, one good thing is that schools here place a lot of emphasis on telling the truth. Thus, if a mother asks her child to lie, he would be confused, and it can only have a very damaging and lasting effect. If someone is genuinely not in a position to greet their guests, they should simply apologise and ask the guest to come at another time and this is quite the Islamic way. Yet, if a parent resorts to falsehood their child will observe hypocrisy in their parent. They will see that their mother tells them to be close to Allah, to tell the truth and to show good morals, yet on the other hand, she is doing the opposite. Upon observing such duplicitous behaviour children will lose trust

in what their parents tell them, become resistant to what they teach them and eventually move away from their faith. In such circumstances the cause and blame lies solely with their parents.

Another quality and virtue that Allah the Almighty has instructed believing women to develop is to remain patient regardless of the circumstances. A believer should always maintain their dignity and tolerate any difficulty or pain patiently and keep their trust in Allah. For example, it should not be that an Ahmadi woman hears something she does not like from a third party and without thought picks up the phone and starts quarreling or sending abusive messages to the person she feels slighted by, whether in the family context or otherwise. Though it is true, in the past, some extremely ill-tempered and ill-mannered ladies have engaged in very heated arguments and fights at Jama'at events, such as the ijtema, we might assume that in the West people are well educated so such things cannot happen here, but regrettably, from time to time they do. It is not only the matter of the past; hence we should constantly analyse our conduct and not think that certain habits or shortcomings are only prevalent in people from a particular nation or region. Indeed, due to the effects of social media and the internet, inappropriate traits and ill moral practices prevalent in one part of the world are crossing borders at an incredible speed.

Moving on, **another quality and virtue of a believer is humility.** It is very easy to say you are humble but sometimes a person's conduct belies such claims. For example, some people who consider themselves humble do not realise that the way they speak to others cause them pain and reflects

their arrogance and pride. At all times we must be cautious and conscious that we never manifest even the slightest degree of pride or consider ourselves superior to others. Where on the one hand arrogance causes disorder and restlessness in society, it also plays a very negative role in the moral upbringing of one's children. This is something to seriously ponder and to act upon.

Another **virtue required of a believer is that they should have a habit of being regular in *sadaqah*** [giving charity] and spending in the way of Allah the Almighty. With the grace of Allah, most of our members are those who generously give *sadaqah* to help the poor and needy and make great sacrifices to fulfil the needs of the Jama'at through *chanda* [alms]. Now, as the economic state of the world worsens and people's financial condition becomes strained, some people may think that they should focus on their own needs and tighten their giving hands. In such circumstances, we should remember those in greater need than us and help and support them as much as possible. Regarding the blessings of financial sacrifice, it is narrated in a hadith that the Holy Prophet^{sa} said that two angels descend each morning; one prays that may Allah bless and increase the wealth of a person who spends generously in the way of Allah and who seeks to support the weak and vulnerable. The other angel prays that may Allah destroy and withdraw the wealth of a person who is niggardly and miserly.

Another basic Islamic commandment is of purdah, which in today's world is often criticised and attacked by the opponents of Islam. Consequently, some Muslim women come to believe they are being oppressed or discriminated

against. The Promised Messiah^{as} has given a great deal of guidance based on the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and the Holy Prophet^{sa} regarding purdah and explained why it is an essential component of a peaceful and harmonious society.

Firstly, it is wrong to assume Allah the Almighty only instructs women to safeguard their modesty. In reality, where in the Holy Qur'an Allah the Almighty instructs women to lower their gaze and to observe purdah, men have also been instructed to keep their gaze down. Therefore, to say that men have complete freedom whilst women are oppressed or restricted is wrong and such false concepts have emerged due to satanic and worldly influences seeking to drive Muslim women and girls away from their faith. Some women say it is difficult to observe purdah in the Western world, but such attitude reflects a needless and misjudged inferiority complex.

At this year's Jalsa I presented examples of young professional Ahmadi women, for example, doctors who worked whilst maintaining their purdah. On those occasions when their employers sought to prevent them from observing the hijab, the Ahmadi women took a stand and said they would not compromise their faith. They would not remove their scarves just to satisfy their employers. They would not forsake their modesty for the sake of their career. They made it clear that they would much rather lose their jobs than be forced to dress in a way that was against their beliefs. In the end, seeing their intelligence and no doubt being impressed by the courage of their convictions and their standards of morality and decency, their employers changed their minds and permitted them to work whilst observing purdah. Do not, therefore, submit to the pressure of the world. The

commands of Allah are timeless and only if we act upon them can we live fulfilling lives and protect ourselves and our future generations.

Social media platform:

I also wish to remind you that you must be extremely vigilant when navigating the online world. People make profiles on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat or other social media applications and display or share their personal photos and videos and engage in the frivolous conversations or chats. A person may think it is a harmless way to spend time but such things have a habit of quickly getting out of hand and lead to an array of major vices, social ills, and are damaging to one's mental health. Even if you post something innocently it does not mean the person who sees your display picture or with whom you converse is innocent or to be trusted. For example, there are increasing cases of boys or men receiving photos from women or girls and then later blackmailing them by threatening or circulating them online or to misuse them unless they submit to their demands.

So, before joining any social media platform you should be extremely cautious and if you must utilise them for a particular reason such as education, you must ensure you protect your modesty at all times. The Promised Messiah^{as} once stated that some people were suggesting that Muslim women should abandon purdah and follow the Western and non-Muslim ways of dress. He said that such efforts, encouraging Muslim women to stop observing purdah were wrong and dangerous. Explaining his view, he said that those

opposed to purdah should assess the moral standards of those nations where there is no concept of it.

With reference to this, we can easily judge the moral standards of today's Western society, by the fact that, as mentioned earlier, in Western countries there is a growing trend and movement to teach small children in schools or elsewhere things that are entirely beyond their comprehension and not at all age-appropriate. They are trying to sexualise innocent young children by teaching them things they are not ready to process. Throughout history, children are not exposed to such things at such a young age, so why now is there a need to force very small children into discussions about sex? All it serves to do is to destroy the innocence of youth and is bound to have long-term harmful effects. The Promised Messiah^{as} went as far as to challenging the opponents of the purdah by stating that if they could prove that living in a completely free society with no concept of purdah or modesty would lead to better, greater morals and virtue then certainly purdah could be discarded, and he would accept he was wrong. The Promised Messiah^{as} states, "it is clear that when men and women are young and have a license to mix freely the results are bound to be extremely dangerous. They are very likely to be overcome by passion and lust." **Hence, there is tremendous wisdom underlying the Islamic injunction of purdah.** Rather than naively assuming that men and women will never be overtaken by their passion, Islam's teachings are based upon the reality of human nature. Thus, our Ahmadi ladies and girls must ensure that their dress remain modest and at the very least is according to the minimum standards of purdah.

Give precedence to their faith:

At the end, I reiterate the Allah has said that only those who remember Him and give precedence to their faith are successful. So, offer your prayers carefully and ponder over each of the words rather than just going through the motions or paying lip service to the words of prayer. The prayers of a sincere woman have immense value and so always pray for yourselves, your husbands, your children, your society and your Jama'at. Always pray with the thought that you are submitting yourselves before Allah, Who is your Creator and He alone is the One Who can remove your anxieties and troubles. He alone is the One Who can elevate you from the basic standards of acceptance of Islam to the level of a true believer and of one who is truly firm in faith. He alone, through His grace and mercy, can ensure that your children remain close to their faith and can stay attached to the religion. He is the One Who will save your husbands from wrongdoings and guide them on the right path. **If our Ahmadi women can fulfil their duties and objectives then *Insha'Allah* [God willing] they can, and will, bring about a great moral and spiritual revolution in their homes, in their cities, in their nations and the entire world.**

May Allah enable all of you to give rise to such spiritual revolution and may the future generations of the world say that Ahmadi mothers and girls of this era played an outstanding role in saving them and ensuring that they remained on the path of the true spiritual salvation. May Allah enable it to be so. May Allah the Almighty continue to bless Lajna Ima'illah in all respects. *Ameen.*

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